nemo

the classic comics li

No. 11
$3.50
$4.25 in Canada

SAM'S STRIP Returns
By Walker & Dumas

The Art Of
CHARLES
DANA GIBSON

Also:
SLIM JIM
DWIG
NERVY NAT
by James
Montgomery
Flagg

nemo contents

No. 11
MAY 1985

Cover illustration by CHARLES DANA GIBSON. Colored by Tom Mason. Separations by David G.C. Hamilton.

NEMO: The Classic Comics Library (ISSN 0746-9438) #11, May, 1985. Published bimonthly by Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 707 Camino Manzanas, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360. One-year subscription (six issues): $21.00. Outside the U.S.: $24.00 in U.S. funds. Second-class postage paid at Thousand Oaks CA and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address change to: NEMO, POB 787, Bethel CT 06801. Entire contents copyright ©1985 Fantagraphics Books, Inc. The articles and essays in *NEMO* are © by their respective authors. Special contents of *NEMO* are © by Richard Marschall and Fantagraphics Books. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission from Fantagraphics Books or Richard Marschall. Letters to **NEMO** become the property of the magazine and are assumed intended for publication in whole or in part, and may therefore be used for those purposes. First printing: April, 1985.

ABOVE: Gibson girl. BELOW: James Montgomery Flagg's Nervy Nat.

4
Editorial

5
Sam's Strip Returns!
The ultimate in-joke for any strip fan, *Sam's Strip* was a classic creation of Mort Walker and Jerry Dumas 20 years ago. *NEMO* this issue begins a reprint of the great strip-within-a-strip, wherein you'll meet all your old favorite characters.

10
The Diary of a Homespun Genius
Clare Victor Dwiggins—"Dwig" served up some of America's most honest and endearing self-portraits. In a league with Walt Whitman and Edgar Lee Masters, Dwig happened to be a cartoonist. Jay Rath offers a portrait and examples of a classic cartoon feature.

16
A Tramp Around The Flagg Pole
James Montgomery Flagg produced a comic strip at the turn of the century—a riotous, animated, vital comic classic: *Nervy Nat. NEMO* resurrects it for the first time in 80 years, and notes its attractions, popularity, and influence on—believe it or not—W.C. Fields.

26
America's Most Influential Cartoonist
Penman Charles Dana Gibson's cartoons changed the way America saw itself over the course of a generation. Editor Rick Marschall provides a biography and analysis, accompanied by a stunning portfolio of Gibson's best work.

47
Slim Jim and the Force
Another tramp character was the star of one of America's most popular comics . . . and also one of its most forgotten. The title to the answer to this latest Comics Trivia question: *Slim Jim. NEMO* presents a complete history with reproductions of its surprising pages.

Publisher:
GARY G. GROTH
Editor:
RICHARD E. MARSCHALL
Design:
TOM MASON
Art Directors:
RICHARD E. MARSCHALL, TOM MASON
Production Manager:
KIM THOMPSON
Production Assistants:
DAVID G.C. HAMILTON, MARK THOMPSON
Contributing Editors:
TOM ANDRAE, BILL BLACKBEARD, RON GOULART, RICK NORWOOD, DONALD PHELPS, MARTIN WILLIAMS
Contributors:
KENNETH BARKER, TOM DeHAVEN, MARK EVANIER, MIKE GREG, DR. M. THOMAS INGE, R. and J.-M. LOFFICIER, COLE & MARK JOHNSON, LEONARD MALTIN, PETER MARESCA, HARRY McCRACKEN, JAY RATH, ROGER REED, WALTER REED, ALLEN SAUNDERS, FRED SCHREIBER, MARTIN SHERIDAN, MORRIS WEISS
International Staff:
GIULIO CESARE CUCCOLINI (Italy), JAVIER COMA (Spain), PIERRE COUPERIE (France), LUIS GASCA (Spain), DENIS GIFFORD (Great Britain), ERVIN RUSTEMAGIC (Yugoslavia)
Typesetting:
ARLENE EASTER, LINDA M. GORELL
Proofreading:
ARTHUR BYRON COVER, LYDIA MARANO
Circulation/Promotion:
DAVID W. OLBRICH
Circulation Assistant:
PAULA MAXFIELD
Design Director Emeritus:
PEPPY WHITE
Supporting Institutions:
MUSEUM OF CARTOON ART, SAN FRANCISCO ACADEMY OF COMIC ART

DISTRIBUTED BY:

Bud Plant, Inc. PO Box 1886, Grass Valley CA 95945 U.S.A. (916) 273-9588

Capital City Distribution, 2827 Perry Street, Madison WI 53713 U.S.A. (608) 274-8987

Diamond Comic Distributors, 1720 Belmont Ave., Bay B-2, Baltimore MD 21207 U.S.A. (301) 298-1184

Fantagraphics Books, Inc., 707 Camino Manzanas, Thousand Oaks CA 91360 U.S.A. (818) 706-7606

Glenwood Distributors, 124 Vandalia, Collinsville IL 62234 U.S.A. (618) 345-1027

Longhorn Book Distribution, PO Box 470007, Dallas TX 75247 U.S.A. (214) 634-8100

Sea Gate Distributors, 657 5th Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11215 U.S.A. (212) 788-1126

Second Genesis, 1112 NE 21st St., Portland OR 97232 U.S.A. (503) 281-1821

Styx Comics Service, 1858 Arlington St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2X 1W6 CANADA (204) 586-8547

Titan Distributors, Post Office Box 250, London E3 4RT England.

Editorial

Old World, New Names; Old Strips, New Looks

I write these words upon recent return from Europe and the Lucca Comics Festival—more correctly, the 16th Annual Salon of Comics, Illustration, and Animation, held in Lucca, a dreamy Etruscan village nestled amongst grape arbors and marble quarries between Pisa and Florence.

As per usual, I have returned from the Salon with mixed emotions, and all this is apart from the busted ankle I sustained there. The American cannot become jaded: one is always amazed at the Europeans' voracious appetite for comics—old, new, American, native, color, black and white, all themes, all styles, all formats. It is the Europeans, particularly the Belgians and French, who are today expanding the comic strip to its formal limits with graphic novels of every variety. Surely this is the wave of the future. I have said so before, and have believed it for a decade. There will always be newspaper strips, and should be; likewise there will always be the American comic book as we know it today. I suppose.

But Europeans' tastes and sensibilities are moving the art form in new ways that are squarely in the traditions—in terms of commitment, excitement, originality, and self-respect—of the giants *NEMO* celebrates: McCay, Herriman, Feininger, Caniff, *et al.*

Hence we see, at places like European conventions, not only the best of many New Waves, but, refreshingly, the greatest of older American strips. There are quality reprint editions of major and minor American classics.

Italians have collected complete and annotated versions of Caniff and Raymond and Gould—of course—but also collections of strips long forgotten here, and artists almost forgotten, in a fashion demonstrating love and respect.

So why my mixed emotions? Largely because I can't read Italian, which makes it all a bittersweet experience. But mostly it's my old refrain about prophets being without honor in their own countries—that comics, an American artform, have had to go overseas to receive the respect they deserve. Yes, this magazine is seeking to preserve and glorify some of comics' great heritage; and, yes, other American publishers are also beginning to collect runs of great strips. But it remains depressing to be reminded how many Americans are quite content to go on living without major portions of their cultural heritage collected and published, available for study and enjoyment.

Such study and enjoyment is more a way of life in Europe, and as an American national, I'm depressed; as an American fan, I'm envious.

As an American editor, I'm challenged.

Another part of this trip was the cementing of arrangements I have been desiring to effect since the founding of *NEMO*. I have secured the commitments of the most prominent of international writers, critics and historians in the field to contribute to *NEMO*.

I am proud to announce this, for they represent the spirit referred to above—dedication, love for the comics, and a devotion to definitive research. They have written articles, published books, and delivered theses. They have collected complete works and discovered rare examples.

I have asked them to contribute pieces on cartoonists from their own lands—for part of *NEMO*'s expansion is to highlight comics from around the world—but their contributions on our *American* strips will be vital additions to the writers we already feature in our pages.

You will meet them further in editorial profiles, but I will list their names here: **Pierre Couperie** of France, author and lecturer of extraordinary perception; **Denis Gifford** of Great Britain, with many superb histories and collections to his credit; **Giulio Cesare Cuccolini** of Italy, archivist and publicist of rare dedication; **Javier Coma** of Spain, whose knowledge and taste in comics spans world-wide production; **Ervin Rustemagic** of Yugoslavia, who as a publisher has done much to resurrect American material obscure even to Americans; and—last, for the moment, but certainly not least, objectively or constitutionally—**Luis Gasca** of Spain. Luis has amassed comics archives of incredible range and depth; his knowledge of popular culture, the interrelated arts of the 20th Century, is astounding.

I have also made tentative arrangements with publishers in Italy, France, Spain, and Germany to co-produce some reprint books of vintage American comics in order to combine archival and financial resources, the better to bring readers quality volumes of quality material. Watch this space.

Richard Marschall.

Sam's Strip Returns!

Beginning a New Feature in NEMO

Welcome to the "inside."

Beginning with this issue, *NEMO* will regularly feature selections from the classic *Sam's Strip* of more than 20 years ago. Created by Mort Walker and Jerry Dumas, *Sam's Strip* was the strip fan's inside-joke *par excellence*, a daily backstage visit to the world of strips—usually, as it were, between scenes.

Sam has no last name and his sidekick never had any name. They live in a comic-strip world where retired characters from old strips reappear, where stars from contemporary strips stroll across the panels, and where the conventions of the comic-strip form are routinely discussed as if they were tangible phenomena. Balloons, for instance, could be read over each character's head by fellow figures, and plucked from the air. When Sam visited Krazy Kat's Kokonino Kounty, he felt as strange as the drawing style of the backgrounds . . . *because* of that factor. On some days the characters would rent space to a neighboring adventure strip that needed more room.

Through all the nonsense and fun is a remarkable commentary on, and understanding of, the special language and structure of the comic strip. What makes comic strips special—their conventions, cliches, onomatopoeia and unique visual shorthand—is lovingly examined, analyzed, and satirized in *Sam's Strip* and is hung out to dry in its remarkable run of daily episodes.

Debuting in October of 1961, Sam and his pals never appeared in more than 60 client newspapers. Sam took in his shingle in June of 1963, when 48 papers were carrying the strip. Of course, the readers who did discover *Sam's Strip* were loyal and devoted to the extreme. Not only comics fans, but amateur metaphysicians as well, could be enchanted by a strip where Ignatz Mouse and the Mad Hatter could sit and chat.

If the Yellow Kid, an itinerant guest on the Sam landscape, couldn't die, then neither could Sam and his partner themselves. They have teamed up, again, of course, as Sam and Silo, in Jerry Dumas's recent King Features strip of the same name (but—sigh!—without the premise of the first incarnation), and Mort Walker continued to explore the conventions of the strip idiom in his book *The Lexicon of Comicana*.

And, of course, *Sam and Silo* will live again each issue in the pages of *NEMO*.

Keep de change.

Rick Marschall

I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE
THE HOTEL WANTS ME TO REMIND YOU THAT THE CUSTARD PIES BEING SERVED ARE FOR EATING.
FOO
COMIC CHARACTERS CONVENTION
5-3
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.

Collection of the Museum of Cartoon Art

Sam's Strip

SIGN THAT, WILL YOU, IGNATZ?
"I, IGNATZ MOUSE, AGREE TO THROW NO MORE BRICKS IF SAM AGREES TO THROW NO MORE BRICKS"
dumas 10-2
HO, WHY SHOULD I SIGN THIS? I'M THE ONLY ONE WHAT THROWS A BRICK. I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
POW
ZIP
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
SIGN
WHERE?
HEY, SAM! WANNA RACE?
NAW
10-1
I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE WITH THIS OLD ENGINE
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
I AIN'T SO YOUNG MYSELF, DOLLINK
dumas
HEY! THERE'S BLONDIE!
A REAL CELEBRITY!
CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
CAN I TAKE A PICTURE?
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
THEY'RE ALWAYS SO DIFFERENT IN REAL LIFE
dumas
9-26
WHY DIDN'T YOU WAX MY DESK?
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME TO
dumas
I TOLD YOU YESTERDAY!
NO, YOU DIDN'T
10-17
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
OLD FILE
NEW FILE
REJEX
DON'T YOU EVER THROW ANYTHING AWAY?
WAX MY DESK!

Sam's Strip

HEY! THAT BUM FINALLY BROKE DOWN!
FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN HIM AND THE KING TOGETHER
I WONDER WHAT THE DEAL IS!
THEY'RE JUST GETTING A GOOD START ON BROTHERHOOD WEEK
dumas
10-29
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1961. World rights reserved.
DO YOU HAVE MY SCRIPT READY?
YEAH -- AND IT HAS PLENTY OF ACTION, JUST LIKE YOU SAID
DELUXE CARTOONS DONE CHEAP
THE NEXT DAY
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1961. World rights reserved.
LATER...
10-30
THE FOLLOWING NIGHT
TWO WEEKS LATER
MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE OFFICE..
DO YOU THINK MAYBE THE PLOT WAS A LITTLE JUMPY?
PUF PUF WHAT A WORKOUT!
dumas
YOU CALL A KOP?
YES! ANOTHER COMIC STRIP STOLE ONE OF MY GAGS!
12-4
© 1961, King Features Syndicate, Inc., World rights reserved.
LET'S SEE IT... HMMM
PETTY LARCENY
dumas
WHAT TIME IS IT?
3 O'CLOCK
CARTOONS DONE NEATLY
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1961. World rights reserved.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WATCH?
I DUNNO. IT WAS LIKE THIS WHEN I GOT IT
SOME GUY NAMED DALI SOLD IT TO ME
dumas
11-23

Sam's Strip

I WANT THIS STRIP TO APPEAL TO EVERYONE IN THE WHOLE WORLD!
YOU CAN'T REACH EVERYONE
HOW ABOUT ILLITERATES ?
I'LL REACH THEM TOO
7-20
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
X
dumas
YOU'RE HOPELESS!
I WAS TRYING TO BE A BIG SHOT AGAIN
10-31
"DROP BY FOR A RIDE ON MY YACHT," YOU SAID
I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
OH--- DID YOU THINK I SAID YACHT?
dumas
READ SAM'S STRIP — COMPARE WITH BRAND X COMIC AND PROVE TO YOURSELF SAM IS BEST
HE HE HA HA HO HO HEE HEE
READ SAM'S STRIP — COMPARE WITH BRAND X COMIC AND PROVE TO YOURSELF SAM IS BEST
3-10
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
OH, THAT BRAND X COMIC!! HE-HEE HO HO HO!
READ SAM'S STRIP — COMPARE WITH BRAND COMIC AND PR TO YOURSE SAM IS BES
dumas
HOW DID YOU LIKE THE DINNER ?
VERY HUMOROUS
COMIC CHARACTERS CONVENTION
GOOD. I WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE ROAST BEEF. IT DIDN'T LOOK VERY AMUSING
OH, IT WAS HILARIOUS
I GOT SOME LAUGHS OUT OF THE SALAD TOO
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.
IT'S AWFULLY HARD TO PLAN A MENU FOR COMIC STRIP CHARACTERS
dumas
5-4

Sam's Strip

!
?
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.

MEANWHILE...
?

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?
I SUBLET HALF OF OUR SPACE TO AN ADVENTURE STRIP
THEY NEEDED THE SPACE AND I NEEDED THE MONEY
dumas
5-9

THIS DAILY ROUTINE SURE GETS ME DOWN! I'D LIKE TO WORK IN A DIFFERENT COMIC STRIP FOR AWHILE
LIKE WHAT?
SIGNS PAINTED CALL: 5551271312
dumas

LIKE TARZAN! I COULD TALK TO THE ANIMALS, SWING ON...
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1962. World rights reserved.

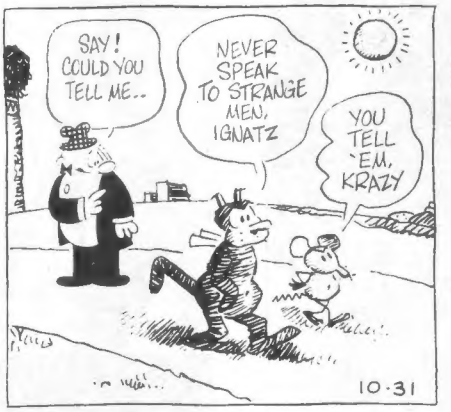
MAYBE A VACATION IN POGO WOULD DO YOU SOME GOOD
10-8

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M THE YELLOW KID. I WAS THE FIRST COMIC CHARACTER BACK IN 1896
OLD COMIC CHARACTERS' HOME
CHEE I AM TIRED
LET LOOK OUT NO

BUT YOU'RE JUST A CHILD!
THAT'S THE WAY WITH COMIC CHARACTERS. THEY OFTEN GROW OLD BUT THEY DON'T GROW UP!
SAY GREAT SCOTT! DIS GAME IS CROOKED
KEEP BE CHANGE

IF YOU ASK ME, HE HAS A REAL PITUITARY PROBLEM
dumas
1-23
© King Features Syndicate, Inc., 1963. World rights reserved.

MUST HAVE GOT OFF THE BUS AT THE WRONG STOP. WONDER WHERE I AM!


SAY! COULD YOU TELL ME..
NEVER SPEAK TO STRANGE MEN, IGNATZ
YOU TELL 'EM, KRAZY
10-31

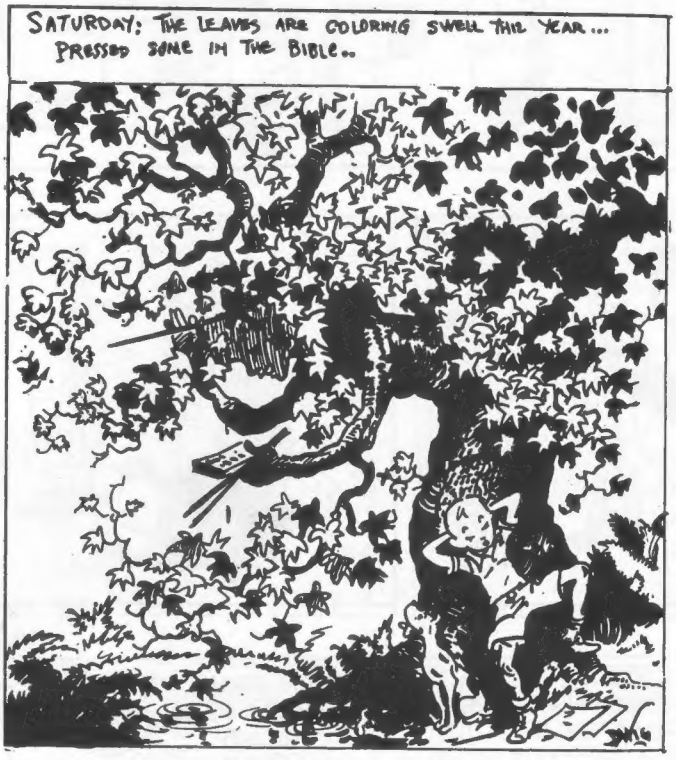
ME STRANGE?!
dumas
© 1961, King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.

Dwig, A Pen-and-Ink Poet

The Native Genius of Clare Victor Dwiggins

By Jay Rath

To the ranks of America's best panel cartoonists—H.T. Webster, Clare Briggs and J.R. Williams—must be added the name of Clare Victor Dwiggins. The work of "Dwig," sorely neglected in general, shines perhaps brightest in the work he did for *Bill's Diary*, the day-by-day record of a boy's life in a small town. Bill Blackbeard, director of the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art, has called Dwig the greatest of the American comic strip's forgotten talents. Within the body of



SATURDAY. SLIGHTLY INCLEMENT-- ME & BUTCH ORGANAIZED A NEW CLUB TODAY & CHARGED J. FILLMEN WILBURFLOSS A DOLLAR TO GET IN
WELL IF THAT SCREWBALL'S GOT UMPFF THEN I'M GLAD I AINT GOT IT
TAINT UMPFF HE'S GOT. HE'S GOT A DOLLAR TO SPEND.
DWIG

MONDAY. FAIR: ME & RUFF WENT FISHING TODAY, BUT AN OLD MAN HAD OUR HOLE.. HE WAS LAUGHING AND TALKING TO HIMSELF... LUCKY, I GUESS
DWIG

THURSDAY. VARIABLE WINDS.. PIP GINT IS LAYING FOR WALLIE SAGER... WALLIE AINT BEEN OUT FOR TWO DAYS
WHY DON'T YOU GO OUT AND PLAY WITH THE BOYS? THEY'RE CALLING YOU
I JUST DON'T WANT TO. I'D GO IF I WANTED TO GO BUT I JUST DON'T WANT TO
DWIG

Cartoons from the collection of Jay Rath and courtesy Stanton and Lee, Publishers

Dwig's "forgotten" work, however, *Bill's Diary* has truly been misplaced.

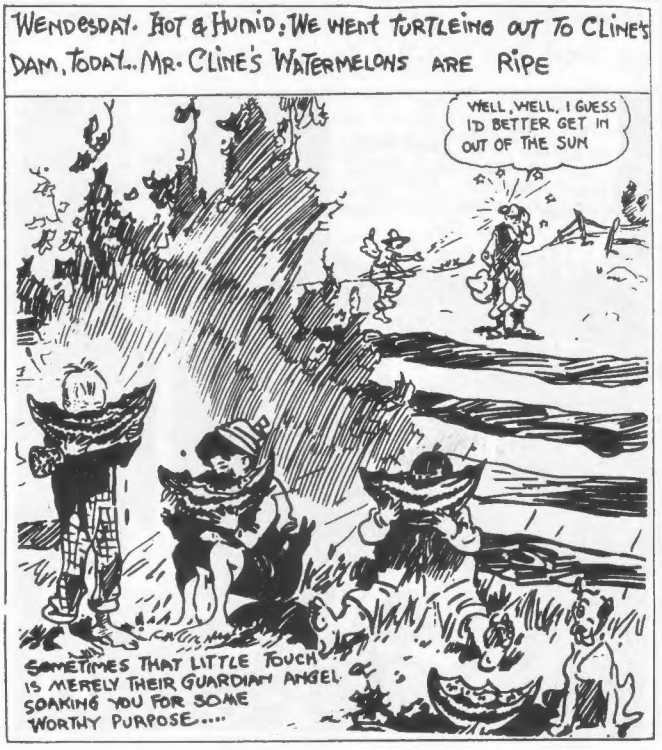
Dwig was born in Ohio on June 16, 1874. "I hail from Wilmington, Ohio," he once said, "down in the hills of southern Ohio in the sweet Miami Valley."

Dwig's mother was responsible for her son's interest in artwork. "Mother used to look at the little wood-engravings in *Ivanhoe* and say to me, 'Now *somebody* made that picture. It just didn't happen. Why couldn't you learn to do that?'" Dwig did, quitting high school at age 16 to work in an architect's office. He worked there for four years.

To say that Dwig grew up in Ohio would be misleading. He worked in the winter and spent his summers travelling as a hobo. "K.C. to Denver to Dallas to Chi! On one trip we left Chicago in a boxcar full of railroad ties—No. 611 CCCC. We lived in that car almost a month, en route from Chicago to Denver. Wonder is we weren't crushed like mice—one bump and the ties slid, but my guardian angel must surely have been with us."

During these early travelling days Dwig capitalized on his drawing ability. "I became a Professor of Freehand Drawings, Travelling College," he said. "We were three. A card shark from Toledo and his (side)kick, a teacher of shorthand (in ten lessons you could take dictation). We worked Arkansas and Missouri. I met the pair in a Methodist camp meeting. A rainy night—they took me in and when they found out how wonderful I was with the pen, they set me up in business. A soap box under a tree at

FRIDAY.. MODERATING... FOUND SOME MELTED GLASS TODAY...
IT MAKES SOME PEOPLE LOOK LIKE THEY WERE INTENDED TO LOOK
WHATCHA LAUGHIN' AT?
DWIG


WEDNESDAY. HOT & HUMID. WE WENT TURTLEING OUT TO CLINE'S DAM, TODAY.. MR. CLINE'S WATERMELONS ARE RIPE
WELL, WELL, I GUESS I'D BETTER GET IN OUT OF THE SUN
SOMETIMES THAT LITTLE TOUCH IS MERELY THEIR GUARDIAN ANGEL SOAKING YOU FOR SOME WORTHY PURPOSE....

TUESDAY. SUNNY & WARM:. WENT OUT TO KIRK'S FARM WITH RUFF BUMPS TO SEE A DANCING GIANT HE SAID LIVED THERE.. RUFF IS THE DARNDEST FOOL
DWIG

MONDAY:. COOL & SWELL— BUCKY CLAVINDISH WELSHED OUT OF HIS FIGHT TODAY.. IT AINT LIKE BUCKY. HE MUST BE SICK
THROUGH LIFE'S DARK PATHWAY THE SUN NO LONGER SHINES, COME LOVE, AND MEET ME IN THE SHADOW OF THE PINES.
OH MY GOSH! I'VE BEEN PLAYING WITH YOU ALL AFTERNOON AND I WAS TO FIGHT KEN SMITH BEHIND KIRK'S BARN AT TWO O'CLOCK...
HOW TO PREVENT WAR

the camp meeting. Name cards, a quarter a dozen. I joined the faculty and taught my art on schoolhouse blackboards. Expenses and an occasional dollar or two. One evening, in a little Arkansas town, I went out skylarking with the hotel daughter. When I got back, I found the (college) president dead; he'd been shot in a card game. That was my college background."

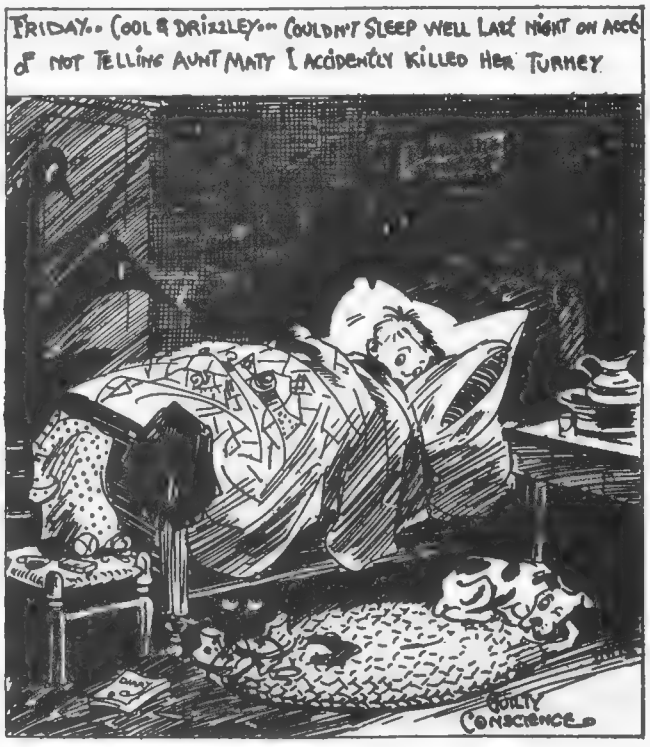
Dwig decided to quit the rails after four years. Twenty years old, he decided a career was in order, besides that of Professor of Freehand Drawing. So, when he found himself in the St. Louis freight yards, he headed to the offices of the *Post Dispatch*. That was the summer of 1897. For two years he was paid two dollars a week. The third year he was raised to six, and he decided that he was worth even more. He spent the next three years in Philadelphia, then joined the New York *World*. From there he went to the McClure syndicate, and then to the McNaught syndicate and later to the Ledger syndicate.

It was during these years that Dwig turned out *Ophelia and Her Slate, Nipper, School Days,* and *Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn*. The existence of these strips has been documented (albeit far too sketchily) by historians of popular culture. These strips are at least mentioned in the histories of the American comic strip; *Bill's Diary* is not.

Bill's Diary, arguably Dwig's greatest work, came into being in 1938, appearing in a two-panel format in various papers nationally. Later he settled it into a single panel at the Los Angeles *Times*.

Very similar in spirit to Dwig's earlier *School Days*, *Bill's Diary* offered the artist a greater chance for whimsy. Each panel was

MONDAY: RAINING - MOTHER STARTED TO LICK ME FOR BUSTING THE SUGAR BOWL TODAY, BUT GRANDMA STOPPED HER...
—AND PLEASE DON'T LET HER FIND OUT THAT I BUSTED THAT SUGAR BOWL, BUT IF SHE DOES FIND OUT ABOUT IT, PLEASE MAKE HER AS EASY ON ME AS YOU CAN. AMEN.


FRIDAY.. COOL & DRIZZLEY... COULDN'T SLEEP WELL LAST NIGHT ON ACCO of NOT TELLING AUNT MATY I ACCIDENTLY KILLED HER TURKEY
GUILTY CONSCIENCE

THURSDAY - COOL & MISTY.. PEG GREENE & HOOKY HORN HAD A DEBATE TODAY... I THINK I DRUTHER BE PEG
SHUCKS, HOOKY. YOU'VE GOT IT ALL OVER ME. YOU CAN REACH IN THE FIRE AND PULL OUT POTATOES. AND A THOUSAND THINGS..
YES, PEG. BUT YOU CAN FIGHT AND I CAN'T. I'M TOO DANGEROUS. I DON'T DARE FIGHT.. YOU CAN SEE WHAT I'D DO IF I WAS EVER TO LOSE MY TEMPER.. NO, I'D RATHER BE YOU.
THE SUPERMEN...

WENDESDAY: MODERATING, WITH BRISK SOUTHERLY WINDS, SLIGHTLY FOGGY, BUT A BRITE FULL MOON.. SERENADED MURIEL LAST NIGHT...
THROWS GRAVEL AT BUTCH'S WINDOW
JIBES BUTCH AND DARES HIM TO COME OUT AND FIGHT. CHALLENGE IS PROMPTLY ACCEPTED AND BUTCH IS LICKED GOOD AND PROPER. NOW TO THE SERENADE!
DARES ANY GHOST TO STEP OUTSIDE (NO TAKERS)
NOW TO SERENADE MURIEL
JUST LOATHES HIMSELF
DECIDES TO DISIPLINE HIS NERVE BY DELIBERATELY WALKING INTO THE GRAVEYARD
KICKS HIMSELF
NERVE OOZES OUT
DESPISES HIMSELF FOR LACK OF NERVE
TIPTOES OVER & SEES UNDER HER WINDOW... PLAYS HARMONICA SOFTLY AND SWEETLY... MURIEL POURS A PITCHER OF WATER ON HIM AND HE RUNS HOME STREAMING WITH JOY —...
GETS COLD FEET
SEES A LIGHT IN MURIEL'S WINDOW AND DECIDES TO SERENADE HER
10 O'CLOCK P.M. BILL SLIDES DOWN THE SPOUT AND SALLIES FORTH ON THE ROYAL ROAD TO ROMANCE
FOOT PRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME

the same: a brief outline of weather conditions, an item or two from Bill's day, and an illustration beneath.

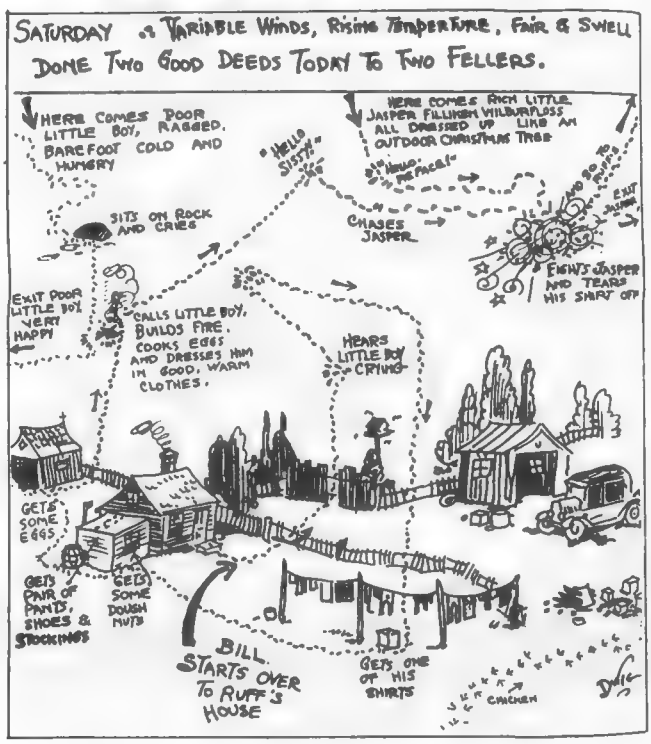
Bill's Diary is Twain's America without the spectacle. It is Ring Lardner without cynicism. But mostly, it is a distillation of the best work of Clare Victor Dwiggins.

In assaying the rich material of American boyhood, Dwig sought incidents and imagery identifiable by boys everywhere. The strip is overwhelmingly masculine; there is a sharp dividing line between the sexes in his work. Dwig wrote about male bonding before it was thought of, or at least before we became self-conscious about it. His boys play and dream in an age before sexual precociousness. If Bill yearns for his girlfriend, Muriel, it is in a chaste, almost impersonal way.

The panels can be divided into rough categories. There is a bittersweet romance with Muriel. There are the mad inventions. There are incredible examples of prevented adventure, hindered through the work of guardian angels (a tough-looking lot, who don't appear to have had the benefit of their own guardian angels while they were mortal). And there are the "Footprints in the Sands of Time," bird's-eye views of Bill's comings and goings.

Bill's friends are an unusual crew. Many of them were patterned after Dwig's own boyhood friends. The cartoonist took a great delight in inventing names for them. There were Ruff Bumps, Butch and J. Filliken Wilburfloss (the egghead). "My pet name," said Dwig in a 1945 reprint of the strips by Stanton and Lee, "is Pip Gint. Pip is my bully. I invented the name J. Filliken Wilburfloss also, which I think is definitely neat." There was a

FRIDAY. WARM—ME AND RUFF BUMPS MAGNETIZED A HORSESHOE IN THE GAS STATION TODAY..
I REMEMBER A VOICE THAT ONCE GUIDED MY WAY
WHEN TOSSED ON THE SEA, FOG-ENSHROUDED I LAY;
'TWAS THE VOICE OF A CHILD AS HE STOOD ON THE SHORE,
IT SOUNDED LIKE MUSIC OER THE DARK BILLOWS' ROAR:
"COME THIS WAY, MY FATHER, STEER STRAIGHT FOR ME,
HERE SAFE ON THE SHORE I AM WAITING FOR THEE."
DWIG


SATURDAY — VARIABLE WINDS, RISING TEMPERATURE, FAIR & SWELL
DONE TWO GOOD DEEDS TODAY TO TWO FELLERS.
HERE COMES POOR LITTLE BOY, RAGGED, BAREFOOT COLD AND HUNGRY
"HELLO SISSY!"
HERE COMES RICH LITTLE JASPER FILLIKEN WILBURFLOSS ALL DRESSED UP LIKE AN OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS TREE
"HELLO, FACE!"
SITS ON ROCK AND CRIES
CHASES JASPER
EXIT JASPER
FIGHTS JASPER AND TEARS HIS SHIRT OFF
EXIT POOR LITTLE BOY, VERY HAPPY
CALLS LITTLE BOY, BUILDS FIRE, COOKS EGGS AND DRESSES HIM IN GOOD, WARM CLOTHES.
HEARS LITTLE BOY CRYING
GETS SOME EGGS
GETS PAIR OF PANTS, SHOES & STOCKINGS
GETS SOME DOUGH NUTS
BILL STARTS OVER TO RUFF'S HOUSE
GETS ONE OF HIS SHIRTS
CHICKEN
DWIG

TUESDAY—DRIZZLY & WARM. WENT FISHING TODAY.. FOUND A NEW, SWELL HOLE, BUT AWFUL TANGLY... GAVE MURIEL A CRAWFISH
FORGET YOUR HOOK— YOU CAN USE A BENT PIN.
FORGET YOUR SINKER— YOU CAN USE A PEBBLE.
FORGET YOUR LINE— YOU CAN UNRAVEL YOUR STOCKING——
BUT DON'T FORGET YOUR GUARDIAN ANGEL—!
DWIG

broad supporting cast, including one strange character that remained forever in the background, never speaking to anyone in the strip directly. This was Old Pete, a handyman who was always painting or mending something, always singing an old, sad song. Pete was one of the mysteries and charms of the strip. His secret remorse was never elaborated beyond Bill's comment, "He says he sings so nobody can discover how sad he is." Pete stayed in the background, working and singing, while children played in the foreground.

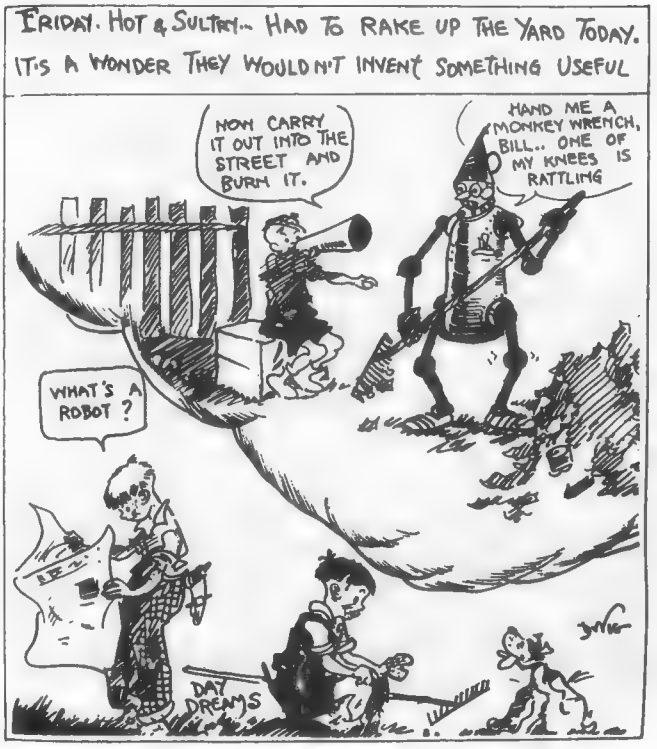
In drawing a strip for a local market, Dwig returned to the themes of his youth; he also practiced the cartooning of his youth. Unconcerned over national distribution, he drew what he wanted to. Syndicate restrictions were gone, resulting in a charming but uncommercial feature. *Bill's Diary*, if drawn today, would never achieve syndication. It would be far too subtle and naive in the eyes of syndicate and newspaper editors.

Dwig died in California in October, 1958. Towards the end of his life he developed an interest in painting. He reproduced his boyhood scenes in watercolor. His last published work, illustrations for *Wilbur, the Trusting Whipoorwill*, a children's book by August Derleth, shows an increased reliance on brushwork. His line became heavy, sacrificing much of the delicate charm found in his earlier work. The marriage between text and pictures in *Wilbur* is effective—Dwig lettered the entire book, down to the copyright information—and it stands solidly on its own as a charming and entertaining children's book.

But for the student of comic art, the immortal Dwig's greatest achievement may have been these fragmentary excerpts from a boy's diary. n

WENDESDAY. COLDER.. WELL, CHRIZTMAS AINT FAR OFF NOW. CAN'T MAKE UP MY MIND WHAT TO GET MURIEL—WE'VE MADE UP
I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW YOU DOUBT THAT I'LL EVER GET DOWN IT, HARRY. BUT DON'T WORRY, I'LL DO IT. I DO IT BY MAGIC... SORTO THIN OUT, LONG AND SLIM, STRING-LIKE, SOMETHING-LIKE A WISP O' SMOKE CURLING OUT OF A CIGARETTE, AND EASE MYSELF DOWN ANY FLUE, TOYS AND ALL. MY GOSH! HARRY, WHY I EVEN HAFFTA SLIP UNDER DOORS. THROUGH KEYHOLES— JUST BE A GOOD BOY...

TUESDAY. FAIR & HOT.. I'VE DECIDED TO STUDY KEMISTRY. THERE'S A LOT OF THINGS TO BE INVENTED YET....
NAW. I AINT NO GHOST. I JUST MELTED SOME GLASS AND CELLULOID AND MIXED IT WITH THE WHITE-OF-EGG AND EXTRACT OF GAS, AND WHEN I TOOK A BATH IN IT, I BECAME TRANSPARENT
DAY DREAMS


FRIDAY. HOT & SULTRY.. HAD TO RAKE UP THE YARD TODAY. IT'S A WONDER THEY WOULDN'T INVENT SOMETHING USEFUL
NOW CARRY IT OUT INTO THE STREET AND BURN IT.
HAND ME A MONKEY WRENCH, BILL.. ONE OF MY KNEES IS RATTLING
WHAT'S A ROBOT ?
DAY DREAMS

SATURDAY. SWELL & FAIR— WORKING ON AN XRAY TREASURE FINDER IDEA.... THINK I'VE GOT SOMETHING
HERE'S A CHEST OF TREASURE BURIED UNDER THIS TREE... COME ON, LET'S DIG IT UP!
DAY DREAMS.

The Comic Obsessions of James Montgomery Flagg

Mr. Nervy Nat, Esq.: Disreputable But Very Respectable

By Rick Marschall

I am fond of cartoonists. They are a very intelligent race of men, except that they have a curious complex. They all think they can draw. They are quite sincere in this delusion, even to the point of calling their offices "studios." And they have models; which is very nice....In America, next to baseball, Comics or Funnies have become the most popular of our obsessions. I am looked upon as a leper because I dislike both of these things. I can hardly wait on Sunday mornings to get the papers so that I can take the funnies and stuff them in the scrap-basket. Naturally there is something wrong with me—130,000,000 people can't be that wrong. Maybe.

So wrote James Montgomery Flagg in his autobiography. Flagg—famed illustrator, bon vivant, and obviously opinionated personality—relegated strip artists to the trashheap of art history, and reportedly he was only half-jesting when expressing himself as above. Certain cartoonists like Charles Dana Gibson...well, *he* was an illustrator...were more respectable, but strip artists were beyond Flagg's broad pale.

He had, however, begun his career as a cartoonist, drawing single-panel cartoons and even strips (he usually referred to them all euphemistically as drawings, sketches or jokes), mostly for *Life* and *Judge*. Arguably he was a better cartoonist than illustrator, in the way that many deem his quick pencil portraits better than his finished pen-and-ink illustrations.

But cartoons were indeed his entry into the art world, and his primary activity for about a dozen years after the turn of the century, at which time he took up the palette and devoted himself more to magazine covers.

For *Life* Flagg drew breezy cartoons, often with verses beneath, on social topics. He focused on fashionable Society, suburban living, women's emancipation, and the like, and became a cartooning counterpart to George Ade. *Life* published book collections of these cartoons, including *Why They Married* and *I Should Say So!*.

It was for the humorous weekly *Judge*, however, that Flagg explored two other modes: He began painting gouaches of pretty-girl heads, *a la* Gibson in subject; and he created a comic strip. Flagg claimed that *Judge's* genial art director, Grant Hamilton, had given him free rein to draw whatever he wished and soon Flagg was a regular back-page fixture with his *Nervy Nat* comic strip.

How fortunate for us that Flagg had not yet recognized the lowly status of strip creation; and how fortunate for him, too, as *Nat* firmly and finally put his name on the map. For approximately four years, (1903-1907) in two tenures, Flagg directed the adventures of this lowly tramp—"Chesterfieldian," as Flagg termed him—who ran afoul of police, bell captains, matrons, and innocent passersby.

Nervy Nat was not as innocent as his obvious counterpart in the newspapers, Happy Hooligan, or even as the Tramp Star of the next decade, Charlie Chaplin. Rather he presaged a tramp character who reportedly acknowledged a stylistic, or at least sartorial, debt to Nat—W.C. Fields, whose early career in vaudeville was as The Tramp Juggler. Nat used the hopelessly florid language of Field's later persona.

These strips for *Judge* appeared in color on back pages or in black and white on interior pages. They did not utilize balloons, relying on captions to further the sequential pictures.

MEETING JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG

By Morris Weiss

James Montgomery Flagg was my first idol. I was about 14 when I saw his illustrations in a magazine, and was absolutely fascinated to see his characters consisting of nothing but pen lines. That an artist could shape faces and figures with lines simply enthralled me, and it was the beginning of my lifelong love affair with pen and ink. Imagine how I was overcome with awe when I first saw one of Flagg's originals. It was in the art class of the High School of Commerce, tacked on a large bulletin board—a 20 by 30 pen and ink—five full figures—a work of art. I studied every line and marveled at the genius of a man who could master such broad strokes.

Then I learned that the master lived nearby, just a stone's throw from the High School—at the Parc Vendome on 57th Street, but at the Parc Vendome, you couldn't get on the elevator without being announced. Coincidentally, Ham Fisher was living at the Parc Vendome, and a school friend knew him and was nice enough to introduce me to him. (Years later, Ham and I were to become close friends.) When we left Fisher's apartment my school friend informed me that the distinguished gray-haired gentleman we passed on the way out was none other than James Montgomery Flagg. I screamed, "Why didn't you tell me?" His reply made sense: "Do you think I'm crazy—you would have jumped all over him."

I was 19 when someone gave me Flagg's unlisted phone number. He must have liked what I told him because he gave me

The series was so popular that *Judge* issued a reprint book, and when Flagg laid down his pen the magazine had Arthur Lewis continue the series in a remarkably close approximation of Flagg's style, which was at this time loose and sketchy, full of animation and visual verve. When colored, the strips were rendered in stone-lithography, giving them striking hues.

The strip was popular enough to be syndicated briefly by *Judge* to newspapers in the company's ill-fated attempt in that field. Nat inspired characters in Broadway revues, and in 1916 Pat Sullivan animated a version of *Nervy Nat* for the screen.

Flagg's derogation of comic strips notwithstanding, he produced in Nervy Nat a wonderful classic of invention and comic virtuousity; he understood strip-making and mastered the form. His strips, albeit without balloons, were concise pieces of graphic storytelling that succeeded critically and commercially.

Nervy Nat deserves examination, moreover, for the role it and *Happy Hooligan* played in shaping the creative impulses of Chaplin and Fields, and creating a receptive attitude amongst readers for these themes.

Even, we must assume, amongst readers who normally didn't like comic strips.

—*Rick Marschall*

ABOVE: Nervy Nat.

RIGHT: Self-portrait of Flagg, from his 1946 autobiography *Roses and Buckshot*.

a beautiful pen and ink illustration—how did he know it had to be a pen and ink?! A few months later there was an exhibit of Flagg's pencil portraits at Pach Brothers Photographers on Fifth Avenue. Portraits of celebrities from presidents to movie kings and queens, sports champions, opera stars, hundreds of them—all drawn by J.M.F. I called Flagg, told him how great they were, and he suggested I phone him again in a few weeks. I couldn't wait that long; I called him one week later, and he said if I could come right over he would do a head of me. It took less than 30 minutes, but he did it with as much care as his portraits of the most famous. When I was about to leave he asked me to wait a few minutes, that I might enjoy meeting a friend of his who was on the way up. The friend was William S. Hart, first of the great cowboy stars. I took my drawing and ran to the *News* building to show it to two young successful cartoonists who had been very nice to me—Milton Caniff and Noel Sickles.

Several times after that I met Flagg in the street and I would always join him and walk him back to the Parc Vendome. He was articulate, had a biting sense of humor, and was a man of strong likes and dislikes. He was without doubt a *prima donna*, well aware of his fame, but to me he was grand. Ham Fisher, when he clicked with *Joe Palooka*, cultivated Flagg's friendship and moved into the Parc Vendome to be close to him. Curiously, Flagg, who had done so many cartoons for the magazines and drew a comic strip himself, had contempt for cartoonists. About his friend, Rube Goldberg, he said, "I never called Rube a poor draftsman—on the contrary, I told Rube he was no draftsman at all." Flagg respected someone who could hold his own on an intellectual level and trade barbs with him. Ham Fisher could do that and Flagg was Ham's key to the New York celebrities' haunts while Ham was good for Flagg's ego.

Frank Godwin, who was a protege of Flagg, credited Flagg with whatever success he had achieved. At an illustrators' affair, Gibson, Flagg, and Godwin were seated on the dais. When it was Flagg's turn to introduce Godwin, he said, "I present James Montgomery Godwin." Godwin arose and parried, "Thank you, Charles Dana Flagg." Godwin told me that Flagg loved it. Godwin also told me how unbelievably prolific Flagg was. He said he had seen Flagg turn out a dozen illustrations in one week. At a given time in the early '30s, you could see Flagg's work appear simultaneously in *Cosmopolitan, Good Housekeeping, Woman's Home Companion, Liberty, Redbook*, and *College Humor*.

The last time I saw Flagg was in Ham's apartment. Flagg had lost his sight and was a bitter old man—his friends were gone, his fame had passed. Aside from Ham, the one man who made his final years more bearable was his devoted young friend, Everett Raymond Kinstler, who visited Flagg often and spent many hours with him.

All strips from the collection of Rick Marschall

1.

FARMER MILKSKIMMER—"Sam, show me what good my sendin' ye ter collidge did yer—ketch thet pesky pig! He 's fer Thanksgivin'."
SAM—"Sure thing, pop! 'Chasing the pigskin' is where I live."

2.

SAM—"I'll nail you in two shaks of your own fool tail!"

3.

SAM—"Got your wire. Coming."

4.

SAM—"Say, you don't observe the rules—this is positively offside playing!"

5.

SAM—"Go on, you automopig! I've got you headed for the old homestead, anyway. Never could it be said that half-back Milkskimmer ever fumbled the ball."

6.

SAM—"A touch-down, dad! I've delivered the goods."
FARMER MILKSKIMMER—"Thet ye have, Sammy. I ain't got another gol durned word ter say ag'in collidge eddication."
THE PIG—"Off!"

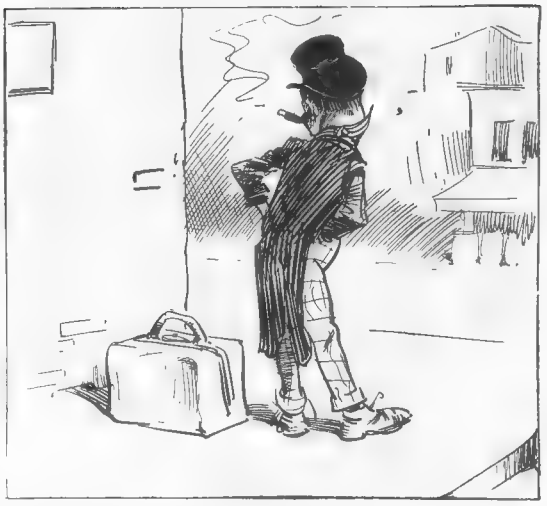
FOOTBALL FOOT-NOTE—An early (1905) strip by James Montgomery Flagg that ran in *Judge*. Full of puns (like the telegram allusion in panel 3) and animation, it shows that Flagg was an accomplished comic strip artist despite his ridicule of the form.

THE ADVANTAGE OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

1.

SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING DAGO—"Kinda friend, willa you keepa da handa-bag fora me—twenta min'—das all—be back on twenta min'—yes?"

NERVY NAT—"Certainly, my dear Latin friend. It would ill become an old New Yorker like myself to refuse so slight a favor to a stranger within the gates. Nervy Nat is, above all else, a gentleman."



2.

NERVY NAT—"That dago, I am pained to observe, is a tergiversator. My watch is having its appendix taken out at Tiffany's, but I am sure it is two hours since that delightfully foreign person with the merry-go-round rings in his ears left that vulgar portmanteau in my care! I'm altogether too cushion-hearted. I am always being imposed upon—like most people with an enlargement of the disposition."

3.

NERVY NAT—"By the sword Excalibar! what's inside of this thing? A clicking, as I breathe! That son of spaghetti belongs to the Black-hand club, and this must be an infernal machine. I wonder what time the balloon goes up? I'll not be a churl. I'll take it to police headquarters, where it will do the most good if it *should* go off. My word! and here I've been standing for two hours making goo-goo eyes at death!"

4.

NERVY NAT—"A race with death. I can hear the awful clicking louder and louder. I never was in a hurry to get to the police-station before. If this thing does go off I'll get no return-ticket from the place I'll go to! The sergeant ought to give me a rebate on my next week's incarceration for exposing this hideous plot. And to think we Americans allow this foreign scum to land!"

5.

SERGEANT—"By gorra, Nat! is that yer infernal machine that you'd be afther scarin' th' hull perleece force wid?"

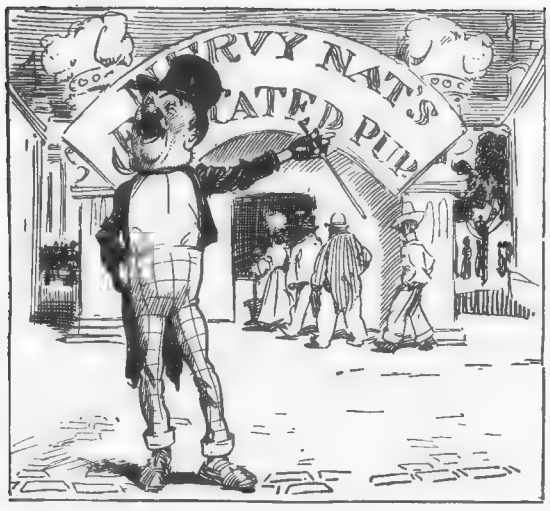
NERVY NAT—"Words cannot express my mortification, my dear Rafferty. The English language is inadequate to convey the least part of my chagrin to you. Will you kindly see that the court is cleared of ladies, my dear sergeant, as I am about to say a few things no sensitive and refined person should hear?"——

SERGEANT—"The iron door fer you, Nat, fer this monkey business!"

6.

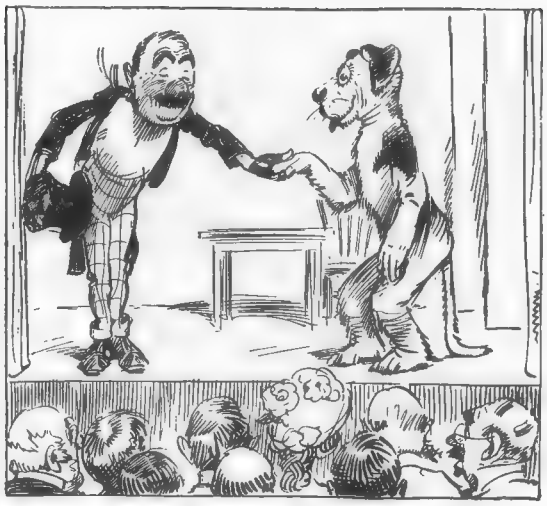
NERVY NAT—"Good-night, boys; call me at eight-thirty. But let me beseech you to keep away from this suite of rooms, for, as hardened as you are to profanity, you would be horribly shocked at the sensational curses and pyrotechnical profanities that I can feel surging in my breast and struggling for expression. Go—go, boys, before I commence!"

NERVY NAT AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE.



1.

NERVY NAT—"Just commencing, ladies and gentlemen—the best show on the Pike! Bring the kids! Most educational performance in the exposition—absolutely moral! Anthony Comstock just refused to come in. The educated pup—went through college—almost. Answers questions of etiquette. Only twenty-five cents!"

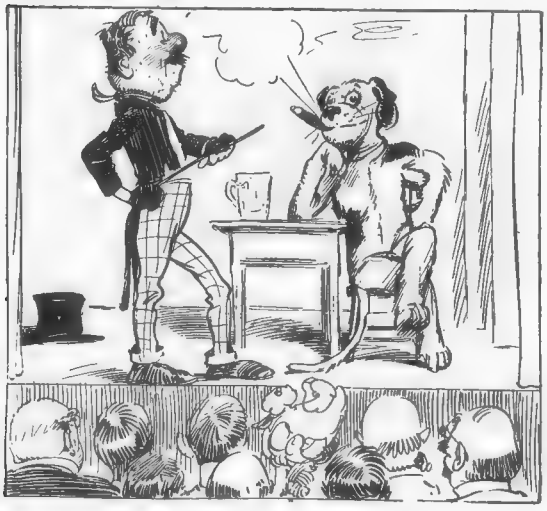


2.

NERVY NAT—"I take pleasure in presenting Rover, my educated pup, who has refused eleven offers of positions as trains-despatcher, stenographer, consulting physician at a hospital in New York, and many others. Some one please ask Rover a question."

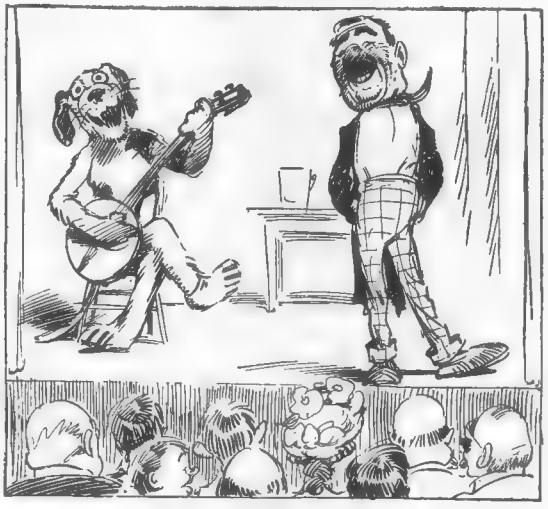
MAN IN AUDIENCE—"What'll you have, Rover?"

ROVER—"One of those long, cool ones."



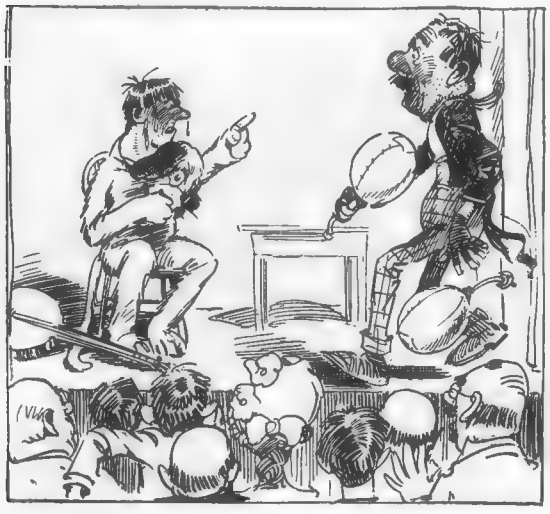
3.

NERVY NAT—"Now, to continue. Rover not only smokes good cigars, drinks beer, and plays cards, but is the only dog in the world—including New Jersey—that can sing a song and play his own accompaniment. Rover, go get your banjo."



4.

NERVY NAT—"At the conclusion of the song, ladies and mere men, Rover will give an exhibition bout with the single and double punching-bags, at which he is an unsurpassed performer. This punching-bout will conclude this marvelous beast's entertainment for this afternoon. Excuse me while I get the bags."



5.

ROVER—"Now, looky here, Nat; I agreed to be the dog for half the gate-money, but nix on them punchin'-balloons this hot night, an' me smotherin' in this dog-mask!"

NERVY NAT—"Well, you *are* a hound—giving the whole show away"——

6.

THE AUDIENCE—"Confound you, sir, for a cheat and a swindler!"

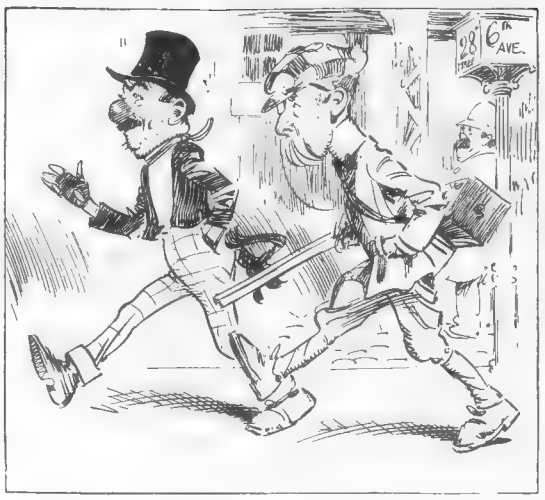
NERVY NAT—"Well, he *is* a dog and a hound and a cur, or he wouldn't have gone back on me like that. I'd like to see any one give, lend or bequeath a concession to me again on any pike, midway or side-show in any other world's fair! This is what comes of trying to amuse the public."

NERVY NAT'S CONCESSION ON THE "PIKE."

1.

SIR HAROLD—"I say, old chep, I've just come ovah from Lunnon. Cahn't you put a chep on to some good hunting—big game and all thet sort of rot?"

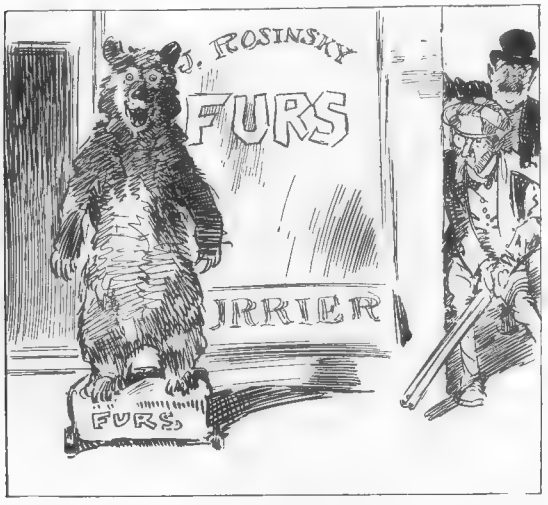
NERVY NAT—"Sure! I know where you can get a pop at a grizzly. Come on!"



2.

NERVY NAT—"This is Sixth avenue. You'll see lots of *dears*, but you mustn't shoot 'em. But what you want is a fine papa grizzly the kind whose growl you can have stretched and tanned and use for your library-rug. We are coming to his lair."

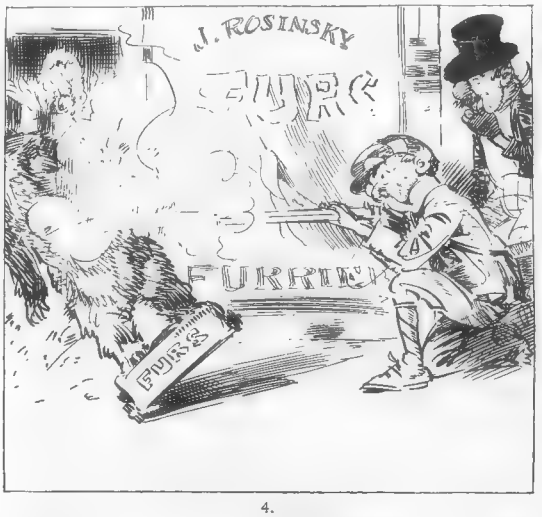
SIR HAROLD—"Thet's it, me dear fellah. It's awfully good of you, you know, to show me, and I'm jolly grateful and all thet sort of rubbish."



3.

SIR HAROLD—"My word! what a jolly big brute! You Americans are a deuced rum lot, really, you know. Fancy allowing these grizzlies to roam about loose this way!"

NERVY NAT—"You're wasting valuable time, old chap. Plug away at him before he sees us. They say every Englishman loves a lord. Well, so does a grizzly. Bang away!"



4.

SIR HAROLD—"By Jove! I've jolly well bagged him. I was always a ripping shot."

NERVY NAT—"I'd like to get my old classmate, 'Buffalo William,' up here and have him see you shoot. It's all very pretty to hit an ace of spades at fifty paces, but it takes the real thing to wing a small, almost invisible, thing like a grizzly. You're simply great!"

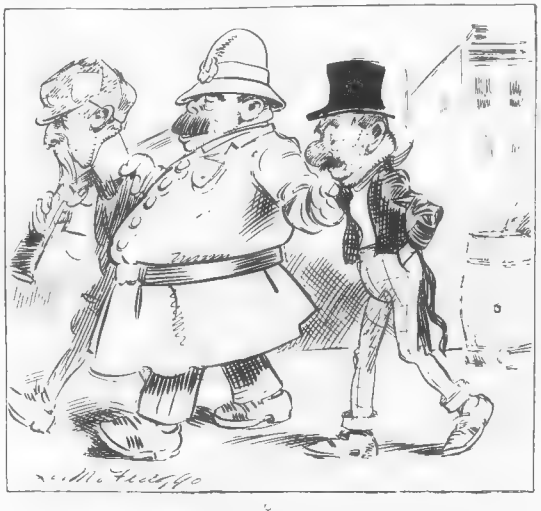
SIR HAROLD—"Gad! I've a suspicion you're chaffing me, old chep."

5.

SIR HAROLD "I shall send the photo to my people the mater will be pleased. Pay no attention to thet beastly old bunny in the doorway. I don't know what the jooce he s got to do with it. He talks as if the bear belonged to him. Such blooming cheek!"

NERVY NAT "Never mind Rosinsky. He has a sort of an idea we were shooting on his preserves"——

ROSINSKY—"Boleeee!"



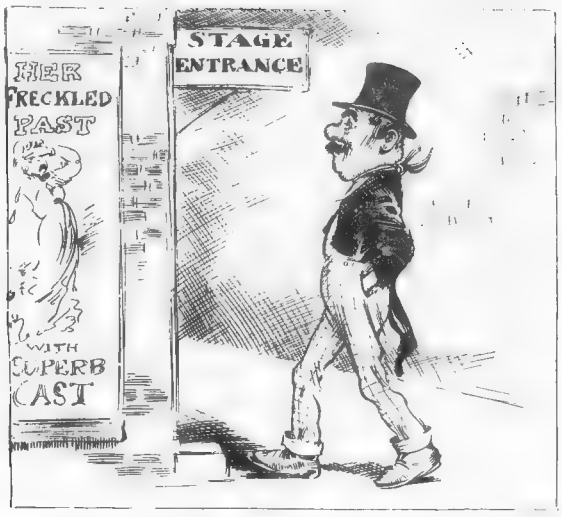
6.

SIR HAROLD "This is an outrage! I shall write a letter to the *Times* immejetly."

THE COP "Oi'll bat youse over th' head in a minnit if Oi hear another wor-rd out av youse!"

NERVY NAT "The only thing about this unhappy arrest that gives me real eighteen-karat grief is the fact that I shall be detained over election day, and I had promised to vote fourteen times in New York and Brooklyn, and I hate to break my word."

NERVY NAT OPENS THE HUNTING SEASON.



1.

NERVY NAT—"There is no one about; I will go in here. At last I shall realize one of my pet ambitions and become an actor. I have certainly had many walking parts in my time, not to mention my long experience 'on the road.' I was cut out for an actor because I can go so long without eating."

2.

NERVY NAT—"This must be the leading lady's dressing-room. I couldn't find any of the he-actors' clothes, so I will just take a female role. I'm not fussy; I'll take any part that is left over. The show must be on, so I'll get into this and take my chances that I can dovetail in somewhere."

3.

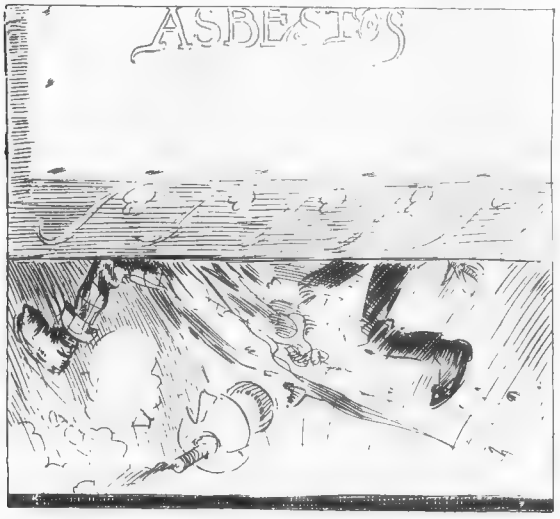
THE HERO—"If Claribel would only come back to me I would forgive her all for the sake of our chee-ild!"

NERVY NAT—"That's my cue. Isn't he a lovely piece of work? Any wife that could resist those soulful eyes is no lady. I will come back to him."

4.

NERVY NAT—"Lionel, I have come back at you! Take your erring Claribel to your pleated bosom for the sake of our little Ann! (By the way, how old is Ann now?) I have done you dirt, I know, but 'fergit it,' and I'll promise not to run away with another insurance man"——

THE HERO—"Curtain! curtain! *curtain!*"



5.

NERVY NAT—"Ouch! that is no way to treat your Claribel. You're no gentleman!"

6.

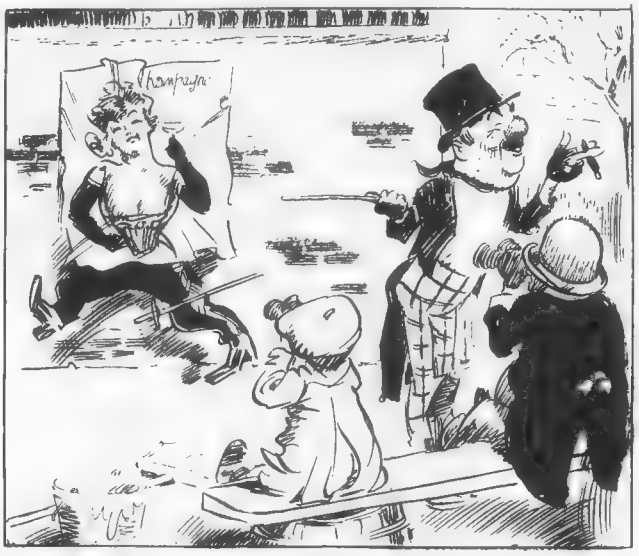
NERVY NAT—"Whew! don't ever tell me that the dramatic profession is a hot-bed of jealousy. Why, every member of this company has given me a boost!"

NERVY NAT TURNS THESPIAN

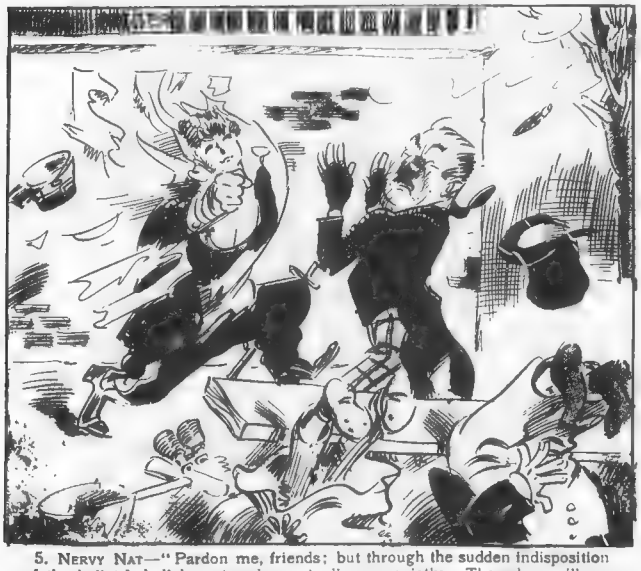
1. NERVY NAT—"Badness gracious meh! what a careless bill-sticker to go off and leave all his bills, and his bucket of breakfast-food, too! I'll take 'em along and have a little bill-stickerfest of my own"——

2. NERVY NAT—"Here is an opportunity, with a capital 'OP.' I know it's against the law to post bills here, therefore 'twill be all the more fun. Of course that can't be my old pal Caduc asleep on duty. No, no: it cannot be! I must be momentarily cock-eyed to imagine this is he."

3. NERVY NAT—"By Jove! that is an awful bumpy wall. Holy Hubers! look who's here! Ah, madame, that is what drinking 'alf-and-'alf does for you. If you had only stuck to denatured alcohol you would not have come to this. I will erect a grand-stand here and make a few nearly-honest centimes"——



4. NERVY NAT—"Right this way, ladies and gentlemen and others! The best show in town—the poster ballet! Sterilized opera-glasses to hire in the lobby. You'll do the management a favor by not purchasing tickets in the gutter. You'll have to hurry if you want to see this, as our engagement is limited to"——

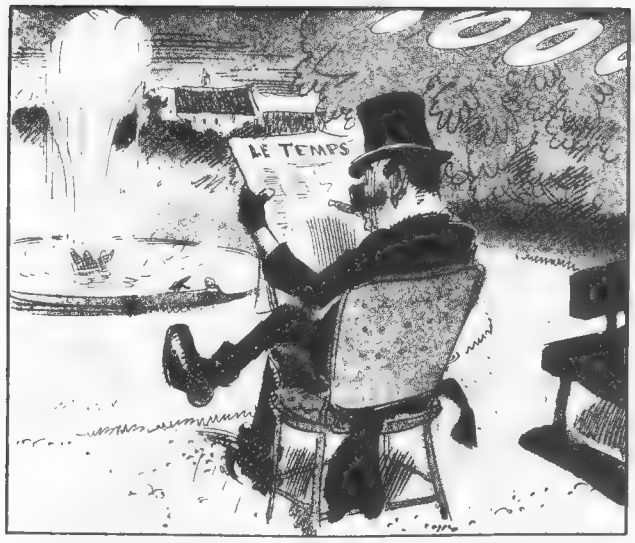


5. NERVY NAT—"Pardon me, friends; but through the sudden indisposition of the ballet I shall have to ask you to disperse quietly. The ushers will see that all the exits are open—and the orchestra will play 'Samson et Délilah.' I beg of you not to crowd unnecessarily"——

6. SERGENT CADUC—"Sacré omelette au rhum! Zis time you one t'ousan' years get. If not I eat my whole family—yes, no!"

NERVY NAT—"It's a matter of the utmost indifference to me. If you feel that your digestion will stand it, why, go ahead—it's wholly a matter of taste. I prefer spring duckling myself."

NERVY NAT POSTS A BILL.



1. NERVY NAT—"Gee! these Paris papers are the limit. They are written in the worst English I ever saw. And not a peep about New York in any of 'em. I don't see a line about O'Toole. Wonder if he's shifted to the Bronix? Believe I'll go get on this sheet and do some good English for them."

2. EDITOR OF THE PAPER—"Certainement: we will engage you, m'sieu'. You can make a startings now. Go outside in ze street and get some news."
NERVY NAT—"Oh, very well: only I had hoped—I had counted on writing editorials. But, then, a reporter's life is more exciting, and my temperament insists on its daily quota of thrills."

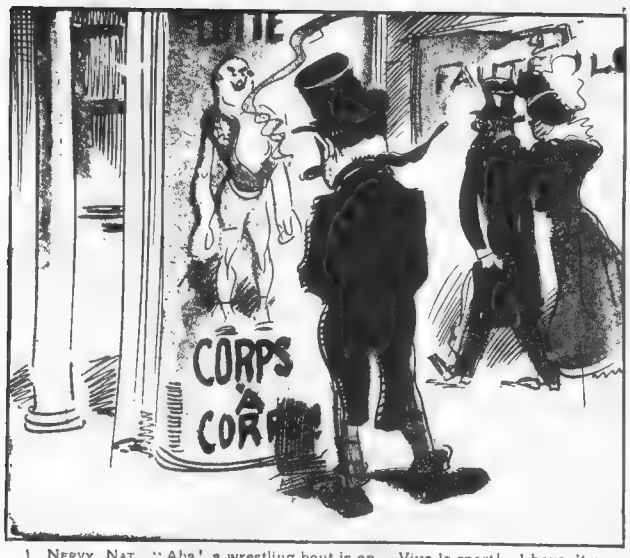
3. NERVY NAT—"Gosh! nothing doing in Lingerieville this p. m. It's about as lively as midnight in Summit, New Jersey. Wish I wasn't cursed with a down-east conscience. I'd make up some darned murder or a story about the reservoir being on fire. A reporter handed in a story to the *Choinal* once, in old Manhattan town, that was absolutely untrue in every detail. They nearly used it."

4. NERVY NAT—"Well, here goes! I'll manufacture an item myself. Take that, Caduc, but don't imagine I have any hard feelings toward you, old feller. I must have one story to take back to the office. I think 'Brutal assault upon a sergent-de-ville' sounds like the real fromage—what!"

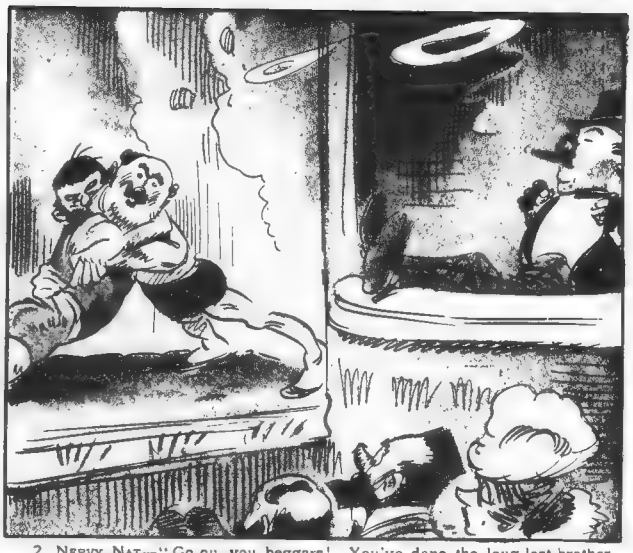
5. NERVY NAT—"'Our genial townsman and popular guardian of the quietness was brutally and perhaps mortally attacked in broad daylight on the corner of Main and Spruce streets, Paris. When interviewed at the hospital, Policeman Caduc was unable to throw any light on his assailant, with the exception that he had noticed, as consciousness was beating it, that the brute was tall, dark and very, very handsome, and was holding an expensive butt in his throat'"——

6. NERVY NAT—"'As we go to press we learn that Sergent Caduc's brutal assailant has been caught. This garroter is a great mystery to us, as he does not look like the ordinary strong-arm man—in fact, his appearance, though shabby, is prepossessing; his manner and address excellent; his air that of the easy-going, cultured man of the world. We hope the judge will be lenient.'"

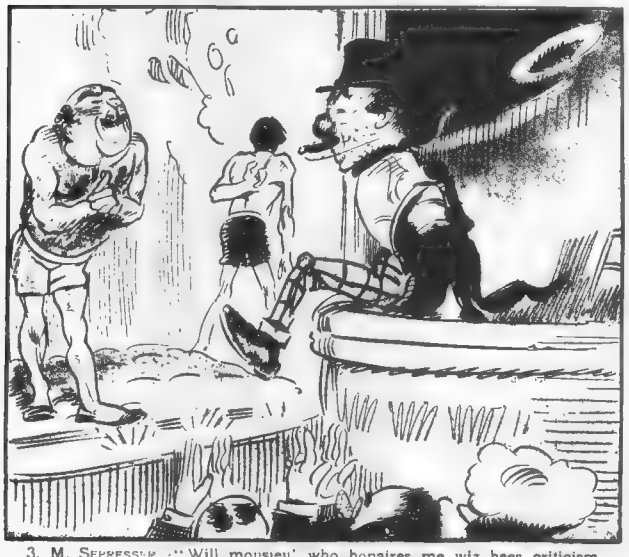
NERVY NAT AS A REPORTER.



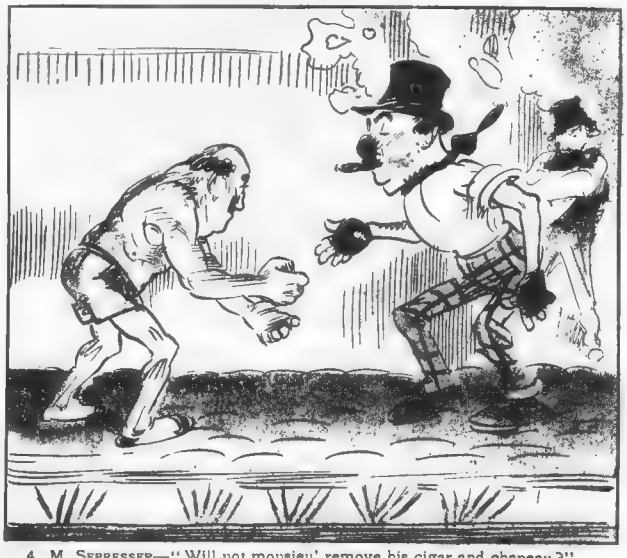
1. Nervy Nat—"Aha! a wrestling-bout is on. Vive le sport! I haven't a blessed thing to do till Caduc shows up, so I'll take this thing on. Don't suppose these French dubs know anything about the art, but I'll have a look in—just for a laugh."



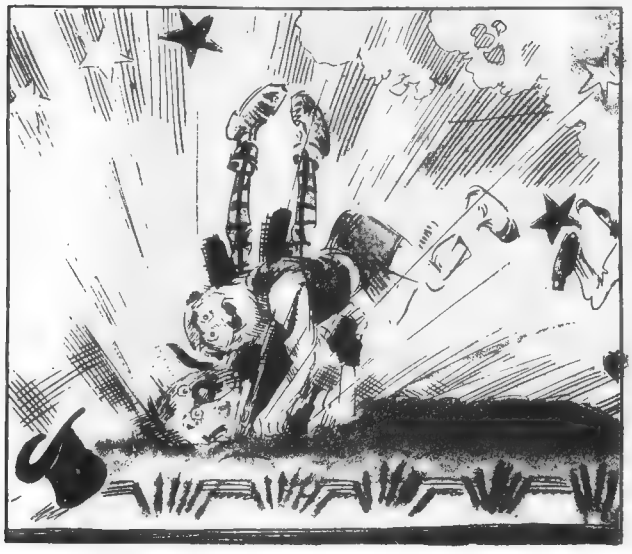
2. Nervy Nat—"Go on, you beggars! You've done the long-lost-brother act long enough. Get busy! Nobody 's painting your portraits, you know. Sick him, Bill! Chuck that other Lizzie on his back! What do you imagine we came in here for - to see you play charades?"



3. M. Sepresser—"Will monsieu', who honaires me wiz hees criticism, wrestle me for ze championship - yes?"
Nervy Nat—"Sure thing, old pal! I haven't 'wrastled' since the times of yore, when I used to lay big Hank Leatherbee on his back regularly once a week, down at the livery-stable. But you listen well to me!"



4. M. Sepresser—"Will not monsieu' remove his cigar and chapeau?"
Nervy Nat—"Remove nothing! Why, I wasn't going to take my coat off except for the fact that I had three or four good cigars I didn't want to crush. You'd better kiss your little self good-bye now, because"——



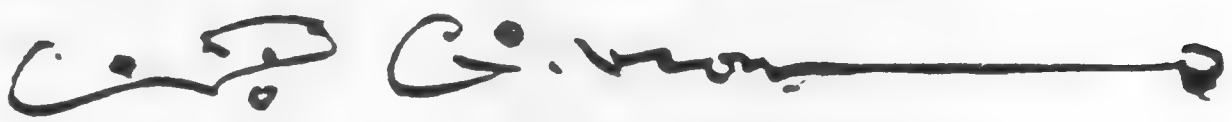
5. Nervy Nat—"There, now; I wish I had sense enough to obey my instincts. I had a premonition yesterday that it would do me more good to get a day in the country than to stay in town. I'm positive the outdoor life is the only one that nature intended"——

6. Sergent Caduc—"W'at it is zat you brosh away wiz ze hand?"
Nervy Nat—"Look out, Caduc! There's one coming right for your eye. These French stars of yours have the rottenest sharp points I ever saw."

NERVY NAT ATTENDS A WRESTLING-MATCH.

Collection of Rick Marschall

Penman Of The Past



By Rick Marschall

Throughout American history, many cartoonists have had enormous impacts on our culture. Walt Disney and Charles M. Schulz immediately come to mind as suppliers of a dizzying array of icons, characters, and perceptions. Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler even enfluenced the course of municipal and national elections, changing the very course of history through the power of their pens.

But it can be truly be said that Charles Dana Gibson was the cartoonist who, more than anyone else in his profession before or since, affected the actual day-to-day manners and morals of a generation.

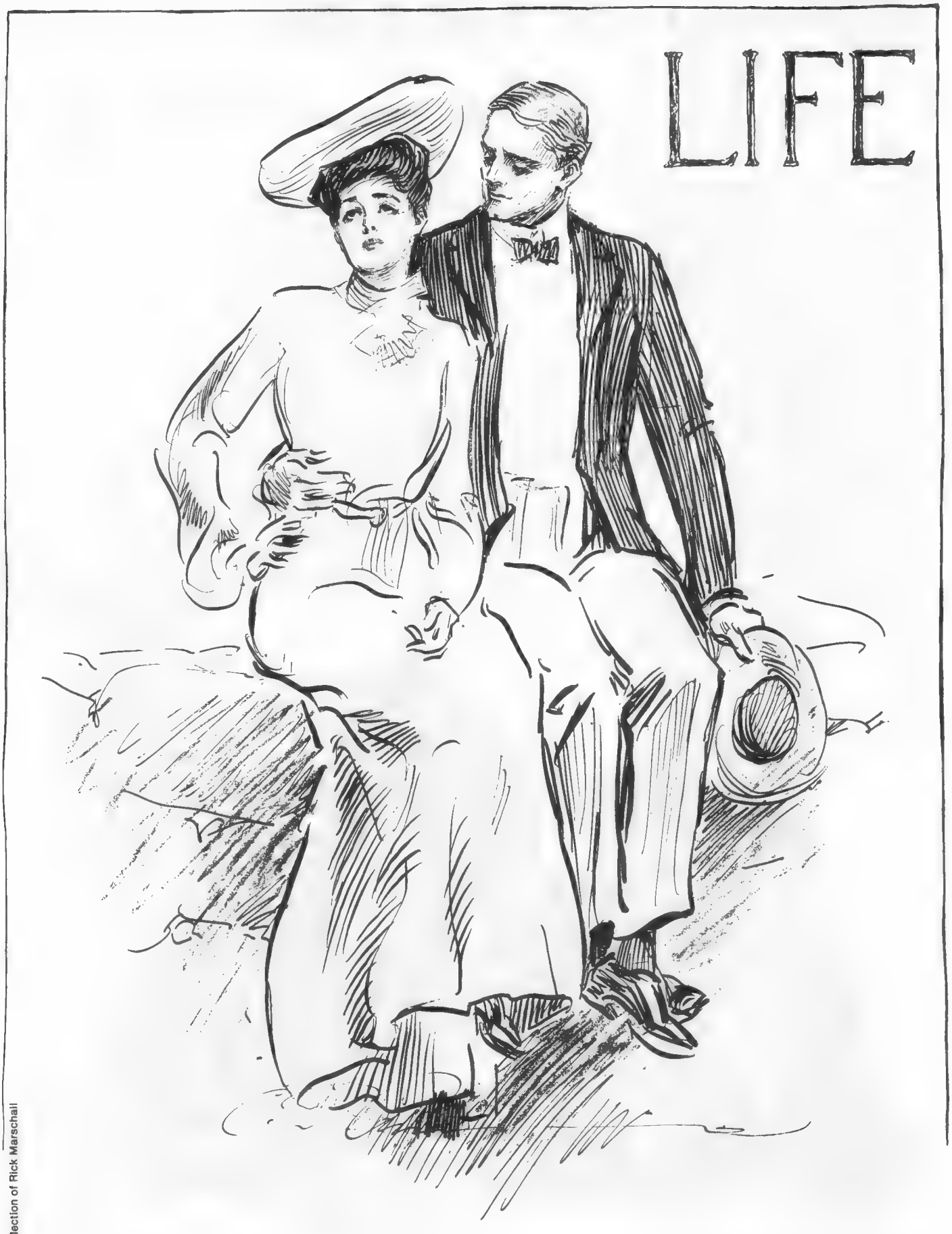
Gibson, through his social cartoons and his Gibson-Girl signature, became the virtual arbiter of fashion and lifestyle during the period spanning the Gay '90s and the Roaring '20s. During the same time he was at the very top his chosen field of cartooning, inspiring scores of imitators and defining artistic trends as surely as he did social ones.

Gibson was born in Roxbury, Mass., on Sept. 14, 1867, on the branch of a family tree that included Richard Henry Dana, author of *Two Years Before the Mast*, and Charles Anderson Dana, editor of the *New York Sun*. As a child he exhibited artistic talent, producing remarkable, realistic silhouette figures from no more than black paper, scissors and his imagination. He spent his adolescence in Flushing, N.Y.—then farm country—with other aspiring artists and young penmen who had recently entered the field. In this group were the Gillam Brothers, Bernard and Victor. Bernard had recently graduated from the pages of the *New York Graphic* to *Puck* magazine, where he was destined to draw those influential "Tattooed Man" cartoons that would swing the election of 1884 (see *NEMO* #9); Victor, as he was to sign his work most of his career, preceded his brother on *Judge* as a cartoonist of colored lithographs.

Also in the group of friends (they were to form their own competition-rowing club) was Grant Hamilton, cartoonist and future cartoon editor on *Judge*. Hamilton was famed as a discoverer and nurturer of new talent; among his "wards" was James Montgomery Flagg (see the Flagg article elsewhere in this issue) and George Herriman. Rounding out the group was the popular pen-and-ink illustrator Dan Beard, famed for his fanciful and somewhat exotic cartoons. Among Beard's credits was illustrating Mark Twain and founding the Boy Scouts of America.

Collection of Rick Marschall

Price, 10 Cents



Collection of Rick Marschall

It was in Dan Beard's studio that Charles Dana Gibson took the entrance examination for the Art Students League in 1884. He was accepted and studied assiduously for two years under, amongst others, Kenyon Cox and J. Carroll Beckwith. When he left the school it was with more confidence than ability; his pen-and-ink cartoons were routinely rejected by every sort of editor—at magazines, newspapers, and trade journals.

He fortunately encountered the *premier* talent-hunter in the cartooning field at this time, John Ames Mitchell, founder and art editor of *Life*. In early 1886 Mitchell somehow saw something in a crude, awkward sketch that a downcast Gibson submitted; he published it on March 25 of that year and thus began not only one of the most remarkable careers in cartooning but an intimate association between Gibson and *Life*. Their lives (the magazine had been founded in 1883) ran parallel courses thereafter.

Seldom has such a rapid improvement in style and technique been as evident in an artist as Charles Dana Gibson experienced in the ensuing couple of years. By 1890 he was an accomplished illustrator, drawing not only for *Life* but for the slick monthly magazines. His crude lines had given way to a deft technique of crosshatching and shading that both set his work apart and caused other cartoonists to scramble in order to study, admire . . . and imitate.

Just at the right moment—the flowering of his talent, the impressionable period of growth—Gibson went to the Continent. In 1887 he visited England, studied the masters, and visited George DuMaurier, playwright and leading cartoonist on *Punch*. He also visited France, sketching and observing, and returned to America to exercise his talent's quantum leap.

What made Gibson so remarkable? The accompanying portfolio makes analysis superfluous, but it should be noted that, as with any trend-breaker and trend-setter, Gibson' combined Old and New. His penwork retained the detail and crosshatching that carried over from the traditions of woodcut art; but his characters had *personality* in a way that only a masterful artist working directly on paper could achieve (the advent of photolithography had allowed artists only recently to have their work directly reproduced).

Gibson's pen-work borrowed from woodcut techniques in that his flowing, undulating lines combined for general effects of shading, contours and highlights. It was the trademark of his style, and the technique that his legion of imitators was so universally unable to duplicate. Gibson's realistic characters had life and emotion. Readers felt what the characters felt, and knew where the characters were.

If part of the genius of Gibson was his grasp of his medium, another was his instinctive grasp of his era. America was emerging from the restraints of the Victorian Age, and was entering both a new century and a new spirit of the times. Women were gaining emancipation; the middle class was emerging; suburbia was establishing itself; young people could afford the expenditures and time for leisure activities. Things that would heretofore have been shocking (cigarette smoking and "pitching woo" in public) or frivolous (bicycle riding), now became things to do. Gibson's cartoons mirrored these changes.

But he led trends, too, and became a social arbiter. His vision of the handsome male happened to be of a clean-shaven athletic-type; he drew his heroes that way; and, largely because of his imagery, Victorian chin-whiskers and

Collection of Rick Marschall

Charles Dana Gibson.

Collection of Rick Marschall

Advice to the Mentally Feeble
KEEP THE MOUTH CLOSED

Collection of Rick Marschall

Collection of Walt Reed

sideburns disappeared. Likewise with his classic Gibson Girls—handsome also, assertive, independent, athletic: It's hard to tell which was the cart and which the horse between Gibson's drawings and the American scene.

"The Gibson Girl" was the national rage and soon it semed that any illustrator who could hold a pen patented his own version—C.J. Taylor created the "Taylor-Made Girl," and Sid Ehrhart drew buxom beauties, both for *Puck*. Other cartoonists followed suit: "The Stanlaws Girl," "The Flagg Girl," "The Christy Girl," and many more followed. And the army of those who patterned their penwork after Gibson, at least at first, included Orson Lowell, Walter Tittle, Rudolph Schabelitz, Frank Godwin, R.M. Crosby, Gordon Grant, Malcolm Strauss, and many others.

The fine line between art mirroring life mirroring art was further blurred when Gibson utilized two of the most romantic figures of the day as his models: his friend Richard Harding Davis, the dashing adventurer and novelist; and Evelyn Nesbit, fated to be the center of the greatest scandal of the age when her lover, brilliant architect Stanford White, was shot to death on a roof garden by her socialite husband Harry K. Thaw.

On the rowdier side of the cartooning street, The Yellow Kid around this time was being merchandised widely and the Gibson Girl was no less evident in conquering yet another world. In 1901 Marguerite Merrington starred on Broadway in the two-act *Gibson Play. The Belle of Mayfair*, a 1906 Broadway hit, featured

a song singing the Gibson Girl's praises, and in the following year, the very first Ziegfeld Follies featured a hit song, "The Gibson Bathing Girl."

Gibson's endorsement, and a typical image of the Girl, festooned all manner of ladies' fashions. Gibson cartoons were reproduced on Doulton China. Gibson Girl souvenir spoons were issued in sets. A wallpaper pattern with gorgeous Gibson-Girl heads was devised for bachelor appartments. Pyrography, a popular craft at the turn of the century, appropriated the Girl's face for designs on pillows, handkerchiefs, chair covers and the like. Many art-quality prints, often limited, numbered, and signed, appeared through the years. A total of 11 deluxe reprint volumes of his cartoon work were issued through the years.

Collier's magazine offered Gibson a contract in 1904 to draw exclusively for that weekly. The price was to be one-hundred thousand dollars for 100 cartoons, and astronomical sum in those days. Gibson considered the offer but refused to abandon *Life*, his first outlet and kind supporter; so *Collier's* allowed *Life* as an exception to its exclusivity request, and the deal—publicized widely—was struck. It was in these years, perhaps buoyed by the widespread acclaim, that Gibson's art achieved its boldest and most self-assured stride. His pen lines were their strongest, his compositions were straightforward, and his themes were the cleverest of his long career.

Love and courtship dominated the Gibson cartoon as always, but he also experimented more with social cartoons and character studies; more and more he concentrated on personality and expression. He also devoted more studies to older people, children and character types—bums, drunkards, and the like. He lightly editorialized, criticizing child labor and stock jobbing, but not as heavily as earlier, when he drew pro-Democrat cartoons for *Life*, *Truth*, and *Tid-Bits*, and during World War I, when for months he exclusively drew anti-Kaiser cartoons. But during the *Collier's* period his editorial criticisms—valid enough but rather more lightweight—were aimed at American girls who slavishly threw themselves at indolent, bankrupt, and usually effeminate European noblemen instead of strapping, native-grown Gibson types.

At the end of this *Collier's* period Gibson made the shocking announcement that he was retiring as a cartoonist; he was laying down the pen to return to Europe, study and learn to paint. This admirable move, motivated by a desire to challenge his talent and expand his artistic powers, was nevertheless regretted by many. His departure in 1907 was noted with sorrow and fanfare, not the least by his traditional outlet, *Life*.

Fortified by several years of study, Gibson returned to Ameria in 1910. He was still determined to regard the pen-and-ink period of his career as finished, but he was persuaded to illustrate a Robert Chambers story for *Cosmopolitan* in that medium, and by the next year he was again drawing line-cartoons for *Life*. Those lines were thinner and sketchier, but somehow more comfortable now, and Gibson again was a scheduled, weekly cartoonist.

He lived through the teens in that role, and also as a Dean of American Illustration, serving as a guiding light and officer of the Society of Illustrators. In 1920 the recent death of *Life*'s founders—including the beloved "General," and Gibson's mentor, J.A. Mitchell—prompted Gibson to lead a group of investors and purchase the very magazine that had given him his first professional opportunity. The parallel lives of Gibson and Life could not now be further intertwined.

In many ways the '20s were the most vital period for *Life*. Besides Gibson, the artists included John Held, Jr.; Percy Crosby; A.B. Frost; Maxfield Parrish; E.W. Kemble; Art Young; T.S. Sullivant; Norman Rockwell; the Leyendecker Brothers; C. Coles Phillips; Gluyas Williams; and Russell Patterson. Among the writers were Robert Benchley, Robert E. Sherwood, Dorothy Parker, F.P. Adams, Corey Ford, Don Marquis, and Marc Connelly. But editorial vitality did not necessarily translate to sales. Even though the fledgling *New Yorker* was trying desperately to emulate *Life* (a premise that has been lost on journalism historians), *Judge* was the high-circulation humor magazine of the decade.

Gibson and his advisors sought an answer to their circulation woes in hiring away *Judge's* editor, Norman Anthony. Anthony's first decision was to re-activate the languid pens of Gibson and Art Editor Fred Cooper. But his second step was to repeat his formula for *Judge's* success—fill the magazine with snappy short jokes, and flapper/sheik/speakeasy humor. The formula worked, but the radically revised *Life*—whatever its circulation gains—was not the *Life* Gibson wanted to preside over. Anthony was fired.

Not long afterwards, Gibson fired himself, in effect. He sold his interest in *Life*, retired to an estate in Maine, and once again became serious about the palette and canvas. Gibson showed his paintings to favorable reviews, and also gathered his pen-and-ink originals for retrospective shows. He was much honored in retirement, as in life, and died in 1944.

It is reported that Charles Dana Gibson, an artist by any standard and an illustrator by many definitions, yet insisted on being referred to as a cartoonist. He was proud of the title and the profession; and as he sought fine-arts training and accepted illustration assignments, he always returned to the captioned cartoon.

He worked in singular fashion. With the nation's most celebrated personalities before him as models, and the nation itself waiting upon his productions with anticipation, he drew upon paper on more of an easel than a drawing board. It is reported that he used enormous, but very flexible, pen nibs. And when he drew he wore a white painting jacket, wiping the nib on his left sleeve after each dip in the inkwell, so as to perfectly control the flow of ink. Standing in his prestigious studio, the toast of his chosen profession, the arbiter of a generation's manners and morals, Charles Dana Gibson worked, standing proudly, with an ink-smeared left arm.

To some it may have seemed an eccentricity, or at least an amusing bit of mortality in his Olympian image.

I prefer to think that Charles Dana Gibson, cartoonist, saw those ink smears as his Badge of Honor. n

Collection of Rick Marschall

DESIGN F

Suitable fo

Collection of Walt Reed

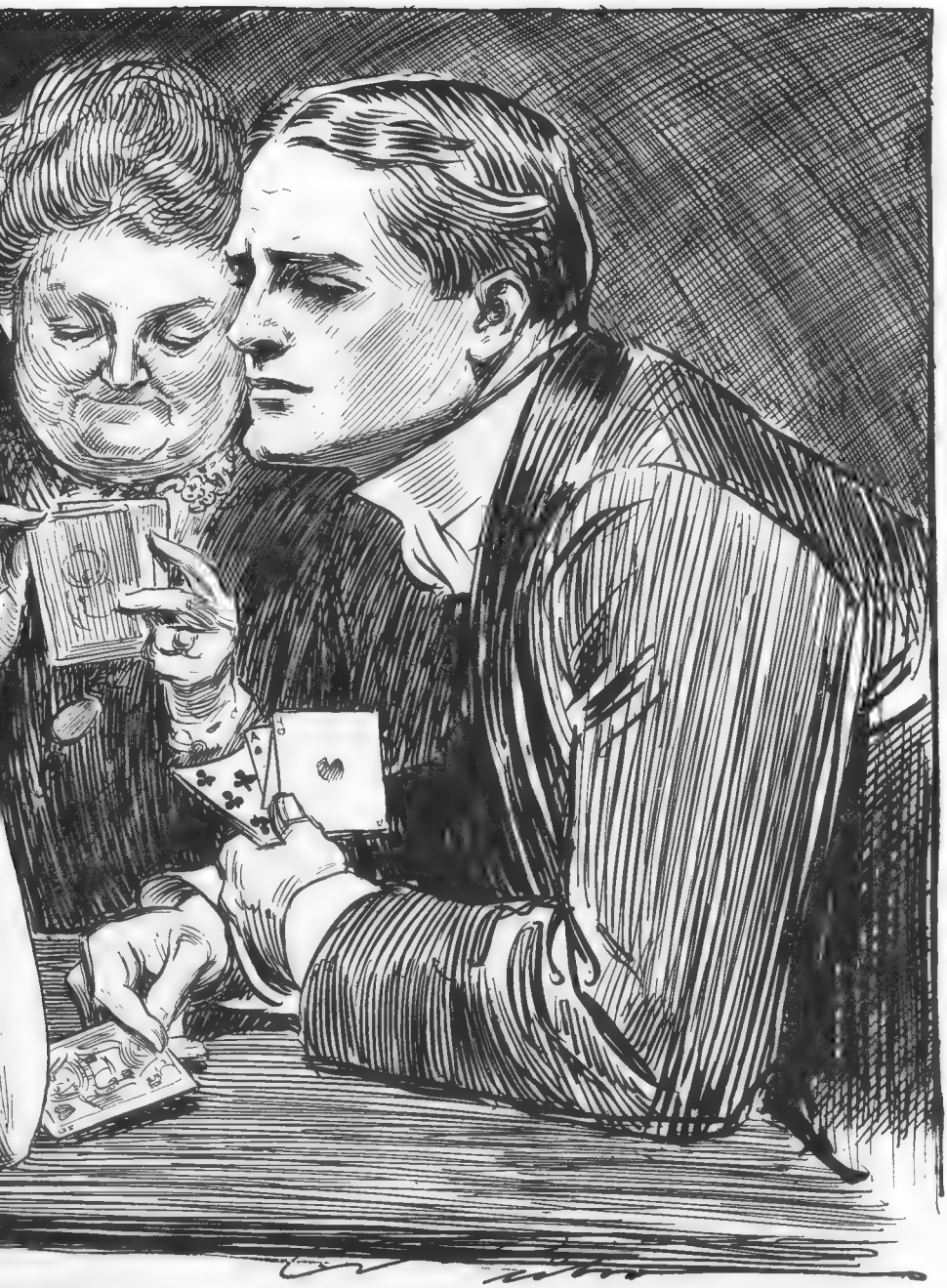
FOR WALL PAPER.

R A BACHELOR APARTMENT.

THE WE

Collection of Walt Reed

HE TAKES A HAND AT BRIDGE AND HAS DIFFICULTY REPEATEDLY TRUMPS HIS PARTNER'S TRICKS.



EAKER SEX.

IN KEEPING HIS MIND ON THE GAME, WITH THE RESULT THAT HE RE-

Collection of Rick Marschall

"The Las

st Guest"

The Eternal Question

Collection of Rick Marschall

Their Firs

Collection of Rick Marschall

st Quarrel

OF COURSE YOU CAN TE

FOR INSTANCE, IF THE JACK OF CLUBS CON
AND THE FOLLOWING CARD HAPPENS TO
OFFER OF MARRIAGE SHOULD BE ACCEPTE

Collection of Walt Reed

LL FORTUNES WITH CARDS.

IES BETWEEN THE FOUR AND THE TEN OF DIAMONDS,
BE THE DEUCE OF SPADES, IT MEANS THAT THE NEXT
D.

MODERN CEL

AN INTERESTING DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE AUTHOR OF "THE BAR

Collection of Rick Marschall

EBRITIES.

RENNESS OF UNKISSED KISSES" AND A FAMOUS DRAMATIST.

The Head o

Collection of Rick Marschall

of the House

THE WEAKER S

THE FIRST DRAWING OF THIS SERIES GIVES A NECESSARILY IMPERFECT POR
CARRYING ON TWO CONVERSATI

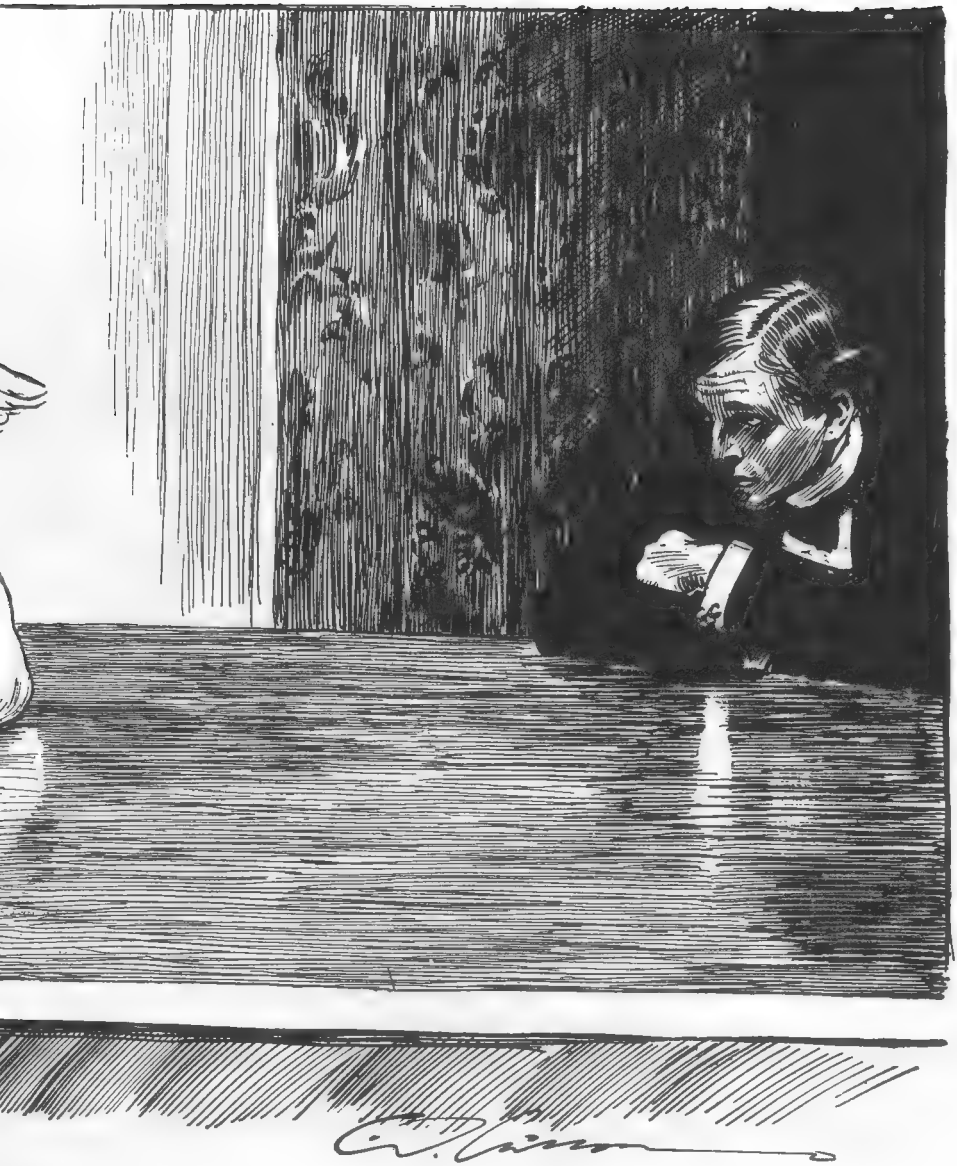
Collection of Walt Reed

SEX.

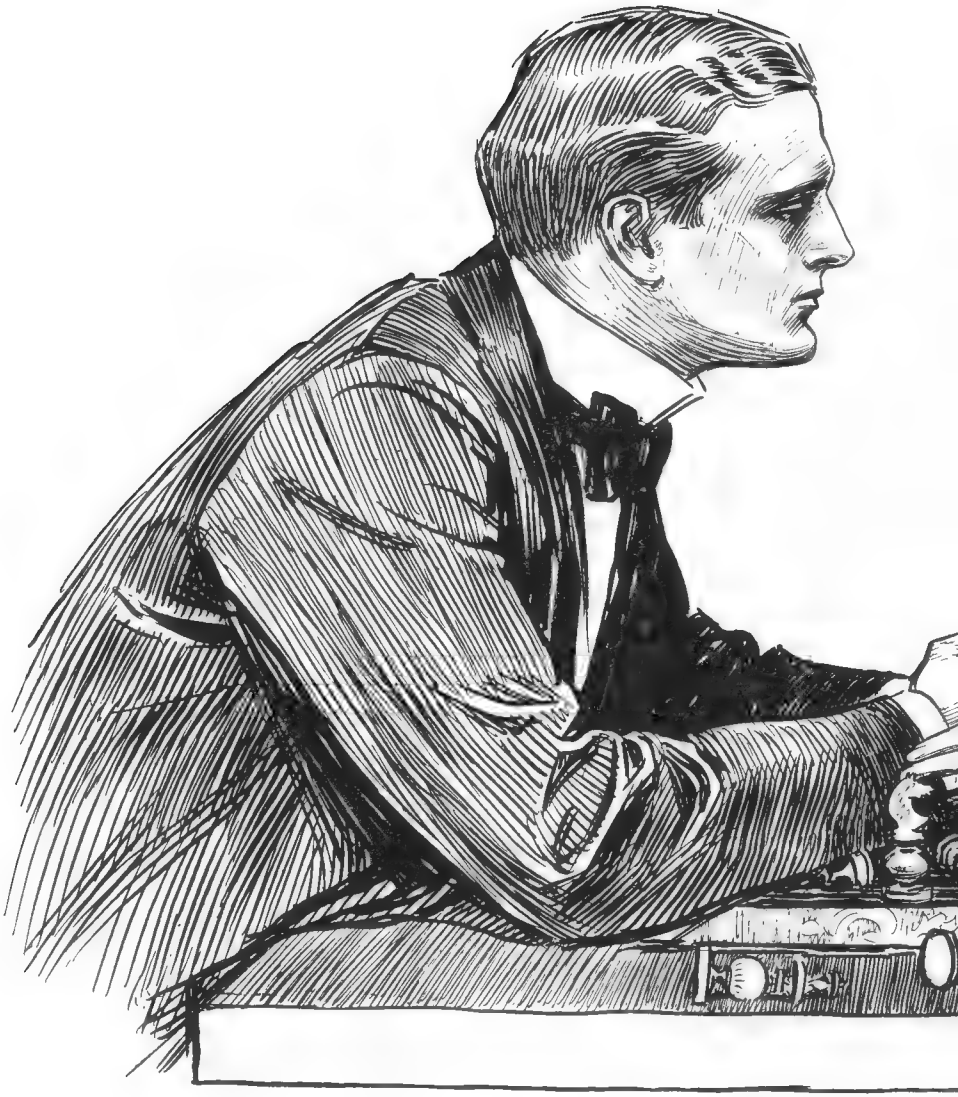
TRAIT OF THE HERO, SINCE HE IS DISCOVERED IN THE ACT OF
IONS AT A TIME.

The Expert: WHAT MAKES YO
I CAN HEAR

Collection of Walt Reed



OU THINK SHE HAS ONE!
NOTHING.



THE GREATEST GAME IN

Collection of Walt Reed

THE WORLD—*HIS MOVE.*

"Two Strikes and

CHARLES DAN

Collection of Rick Marschall

the Bases Full"

A. GIBSON

Fan

Collection of Rick Marschall

ned Out

WHO CA

Collection of Walt Reed

RES!

The Force Was With Him

The Ecapades and Escapes Of Slim Jim

By Rick Marschall

Who remembers *Slim Jim*? Today's generation wouldn't, for the comic strip faded from sight in 1937. It was distributed by a small syndicate, mostly to rural papers, and therefore was easily, if unjustly, forgotten by mainstream historians and big-city fans.

But older generation might recall the feature, for it was one of the most popular of strips over the span of a third of a century, And during that time it was more than adequate; it frequently displayed outright brilliance and visual pyrotechnics.

The theme was simple: *Slim Jim* was basically a one-gag strip (but so were many of the early classics like *Buster Brown, Happy Hooligan, Maud the Mule,* and *The Katzenjammer Kids*); playing variations on a theme, Slim Jim—variously called the Circus Acrobat and the Hobo Acrobat—is pursued by the Grassville Police Force. We're never aware of his crime, but it certainly can't be vagrancy—Slim Jim leads the force through countryside and cityscape, and indeed across the entire globe.

But first, the origins of this long-running romp, which are obscured by the dust coughed up by ancient—and usually incomplete—newspaper files. *Jim* began life as *Circus Solly*, in the pre-print syndicate offerings of the *Chicago Daily News* of Feb. 21, 1904. The *News* put together weekly full-page collections of scores of cartoons and jokes, and the boilerplate pages were distributed widely to newspapers at the turn of the century. George Frink was the creator of *Circus Solly*, and his simple multi-panel strips shared space with panel cartoons of his and other cartoonists. Incidentally, those fellow artists who got their starts on the *News* page included Ed Cary (later to draw *Simple Simple* and many other strips); Roy Taylor (*Yens Yenson, Yanitor*), Harry Hershfield (*Abie the Agent*); and H.T. Webster (*The Timid Soul*). It is apparent that John T. McCutcheon also freelanced genre cartoons to the page under a pen-name.

Solly was originally a tramp of a more larcenous bent than Happy Hooligan, and he utilized his circus-acrobatic talents to advance his schemes. Soon he acquired a trio of pursuers, although in each of the simple strips he outwitted them. Eventually the three cops took on regular appearances and names—The Captain ("Cap"), Bill, and Loui (later Shorty) of the Grassville Police Force. In truth the cast was a rural foreshadowing of Charlie Chaplin and the Keystone Kops, or Buster Keaton and his tormentors-in-blue.

Frink's strip took increasing prominence on the *Daily News* humor page, and by June of 1905 the creator moved across town and drew Solly's adventures for the *Chicago Tribune's* Sunday section (the outside dates I have discovered are June 18–Sept. 17). Frink's tenure on the *Tribune* seems to have been part of the shuffling of local and syndicated material that eventually resulted, after Frink's departure, in Lyonel Feininger's assignment to the Sunday supplement.

Circus Solly returned exclusively to the *Daily News*, now under a logo for the syndicated offering, and during these moves the theme had been definitively established. It was the Eternal Chase, and readers were having as much fun as Frink obviously had in drawing it. Slapstick abounded, and all types of inventive gimmicks were used to keep Solly one step ahead of the Force.

Frink, today clouded in his own virtual anonymity, was flying high at the time himself. Between 1905 and 1907 he illustrated two books in the enormously popular series of George W. Peck: *Peck's Bad Boy and the Circus* (we can wonder whether the book assignment in 1904 inspired Circus Solly) and *Peck's Bad Boy and the Cowboys*. Frink had a marvelous, comic pen style. His shading borrowed from the handsome technique then in vogue with such master illustrators as Charles Sarka and Joseph Clement Coll. Frink's compositions were novel, and he spotted his dark and light areas arrestingly. Parallel, scratchy lines

wispily combined for shading and textures, and the total effect of his art was as homespun as his subjects. There was constant movement and animation in Frink cartoons, appropriate to both the mayhem of Peck's Bad Boy and the cross-country chases of Circus Solly . . . or Slim Jim.

Slim Jim the strip became in 1910 when Frink changed addresses again. He had begun drawing Sunday pages for another boilerplate syndicate, the World Color Printing Company of St. Louis, in 1906. For WCP he interited George Herriman's *Rosy Posy, Mama's Girl*, which he drew for two years; in 1909 he drew *Those Foolish, Foolish Questions*, swiped from the popular series begun the year before by ex-WCP staffer Rube Goldberg.

In September of 1910 (according to some sources: The earliest date I have discovered is Oct. 10), Solly was re-incarnated as Slim Jim. And the interesting, significant World Color Printing Company had a new permanent fixture for its front page. *Major Ozone's Fresh Air Crusade*, by Herriman, had been its main attraction in years previous and *Dem Boys*, a shameless imitation by Karls of *The Katzenjammer Kids*, was to bump it temporarily in the mid-teens. But *Slim Jim* was a hit, starring in the many newspapers—most of them rural and small-circulation—that WCP served. The *Press*, the pre-Paterson *New York Daily News* and the *San Francisco Call*; but mainly its clients were in the league of the *Bellefontaine (Ohio) Index-Repository* and the *Boise, Idaho, Evening Capital-News*.

For reasons lost to us, Frink left his strip after several months of handsome, more streamlined production. He returned to draw a dozen pages in 1915, but otherwise we hear no more of him in comics history. Both his artwork and his inventive skills were remarkable, and his disappearance, for whatever reason, is regrettable.

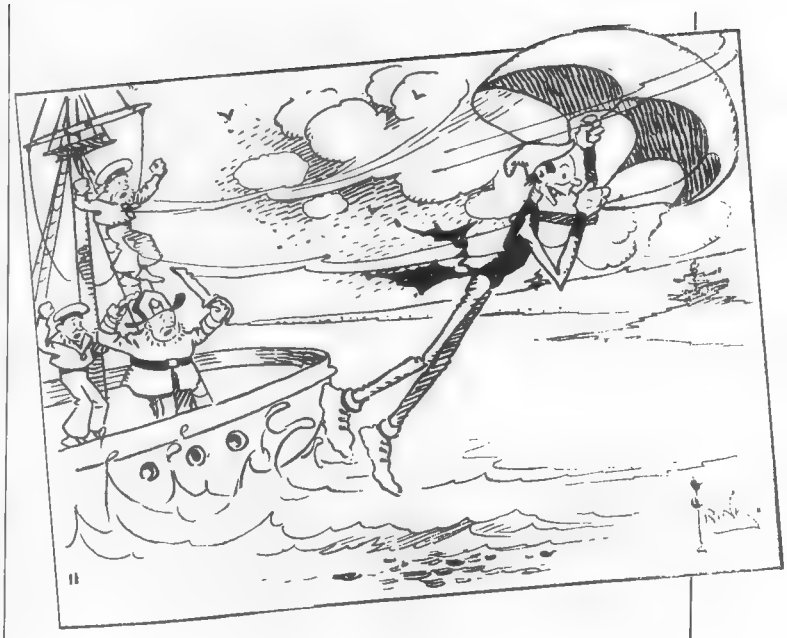
Fortunately, however, for *Slim Jim*, and for us, Frink's successor was the incredible artist Raymond Crawford Ewer (profiled in *NEMO* #10). Ewer had been doing staff work for the WCP syndicate, including duties on the *Foolish Questions* pastiche; *Alexander the Cat*, inherited from Herriman (Frink himself drew an *Alexander* page on Jan. 1, 1911); and his own *Brown, the City Farmer*, which ran during 1910.

His first *Slim Jim and the Force* page appeared on Jan. 15, 1911 (or a day earlier in many of the WCP's clients that did not publish Sunday editions). Ewer's handling of the strip was a tour-de-force, seemingly borrowing from Feininger's use of the total page design, and, as noted last issue, perhaps borrowing pen techniques from Heinrich Kley. (During Ewer's tenure on *Slim Jim* he visited Europe, and very likely came in contact with Kley's work, if not Kley himself.)

Under Ray Ewer, Jim became even slimmer, and his adventures more animated. The acrobatic tricks took a back seat, and Ewer seemed to parallel the comedy of the emerging motion picture—more build-up, more action, more slapstick. In his artwork he enjoyed pulling the "camera" back and revealing in wide-angle scenes of astounding detail. Buildings and gadgets were lovingly rendered, and panels crawl with dozens of figures. During this period, it can be said, *Slim Jim* achieved first-rank status as a comic strip of memorable imagery and invention. It was clear that this artist, too, and no doubt the readers once again, were having fun.

But the fun must have waned—or, evidently the lure of New York contracts with *Judge* and *Puck* magazines proved more compelling. By early, 1915 Ewer had left Jim to his own devices in outwitting the Force.

He also left *Slim Jim* to a brief jumble of artists, including Stanley Armstrong, C.W. Kahles, and the re-emergent Frink, all



of whom subbed in an apparent audition role. (Kahles, by the way, of *Hairbreadth Harry* fame, signed this work "Sterling," as did many of the WCP artists when they needed pseudonyms. Sterling was the middle name of the syndicate president, Robert S. Grable.)

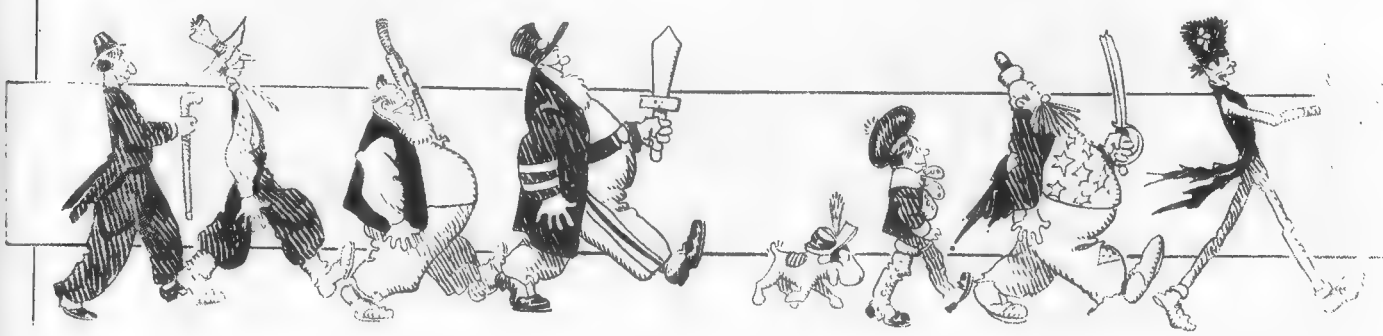
Armstrong finally won out, and by the latter part of 1915 he became the permanent, and last, artist on the strip. "Armi" displayed talent and molded Slim Jim nearer his own heart's desire, but was at a disadvantage, from our perspective, in having to follow two original, creative and superior comic talents.

Under his handling *Slim Jim* was a consistent strip, slightly different than before, and certainly more personal to the readers. Frink enjoyed the premise and gentle gag construction; Ewer pursued visual fireworks, sometimes at the expense of characterization. But Armstrong reached out to readers. He solicited letters, and referred to them. He had his characters speak in rhyme. He, too, utilized his panel arrangement, but it seemed more to draw the reader in rather than to impress him.

Slim Jim as a character adopted more of a personality. He became somewhat crazed, almost manic, in his comic pursuits. He also took on a crew of youngsters as pals, and embarked on some surreal, dream-like adventures. Slim Jim, through the years, travelled many roads, and few of them were dull.

But the roads did have ends. Economic factors—if nothing else—brought the World Color Printing Company Sunday supplement operation to a halt in 1937. Slim Jim died with it, disappearing from the few client papers that remained, including the late, lamented *Brooklyn Eagle*.

Under three primary artists in three moderate outlets, Slim Jim, *ne* Circus Solly, had a respectable run, as it were. History may have passed him by up to this point, but we would do well to join the three bumbling cops of the Grassville Force, and pursue him also. As the following pages show, those remote corners of America where *Slim Jim* was a favorite were treated to some remarkable comic strips. **n**



CIRCUS SOLLY MEETS AN OLD FRIEND.

Circus Solly—"Well, if dat plug don't look like ol' Callee Charlie, wot dey sold out o' de show!

"Howdy, Charlie, ol' chap! Say, has yer forgot yer trainin'?

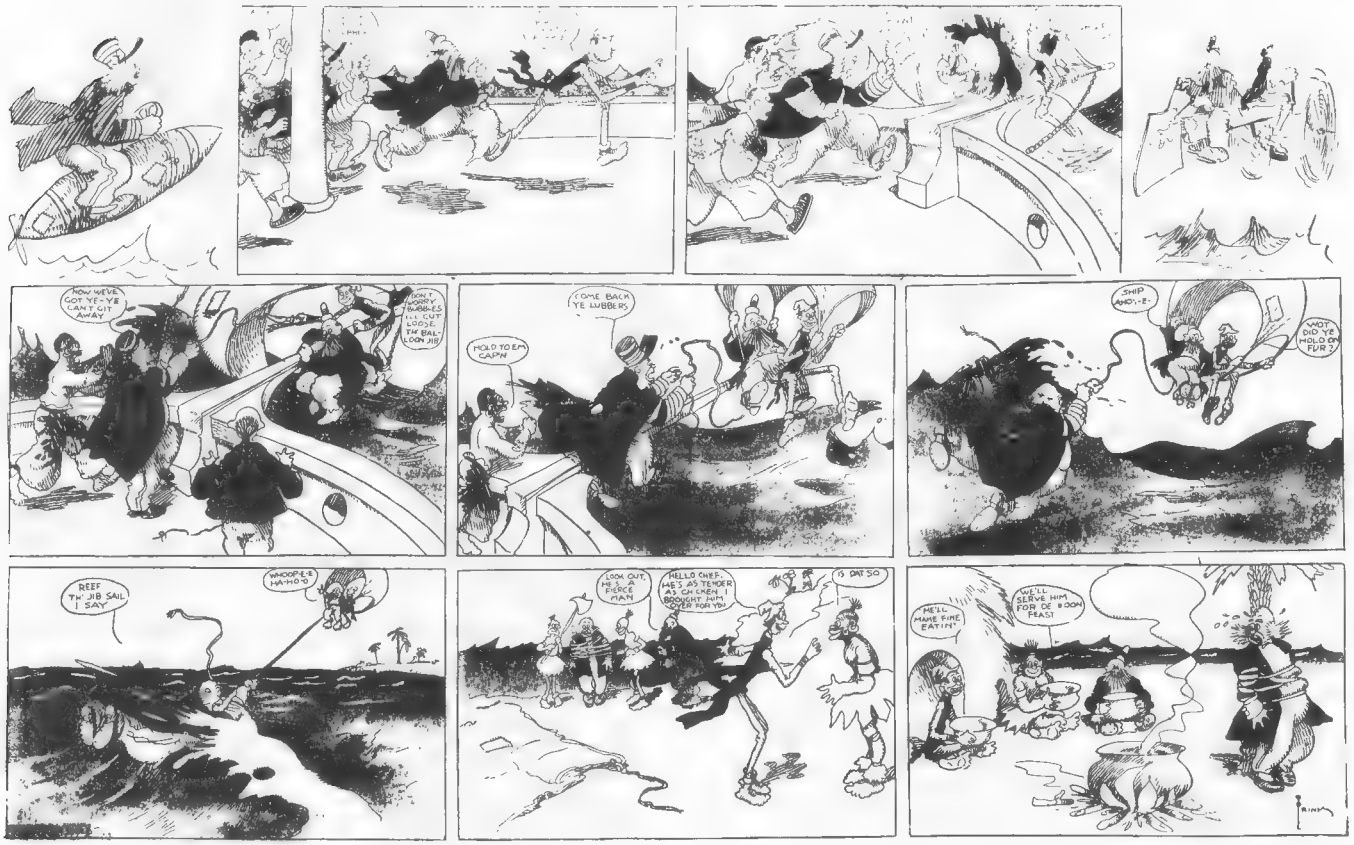
"Well, I should say not! Mornin', old boy!

"An' I see dat you hain't forgot yer fancy balancin' stunt.

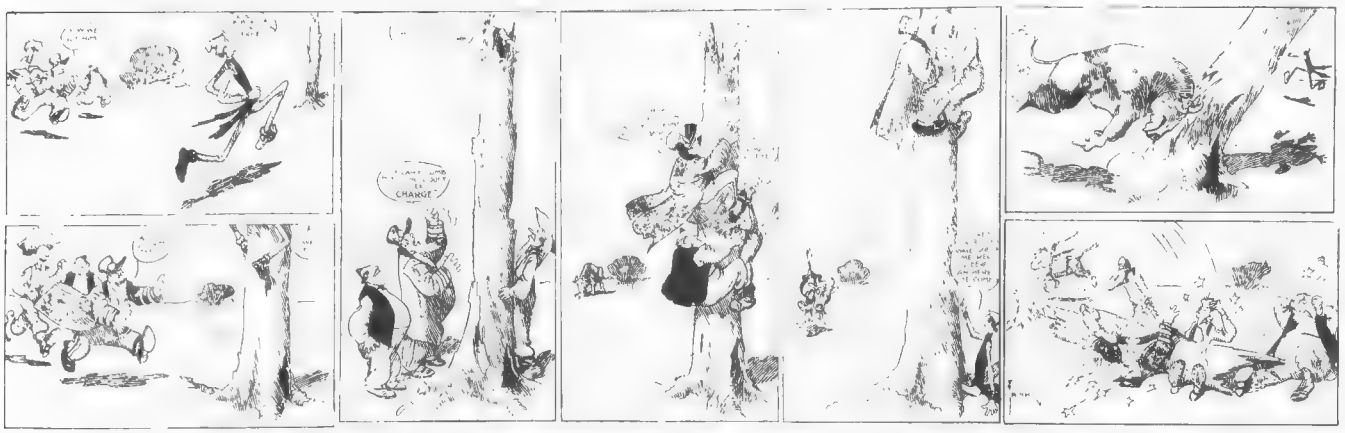
"Dis is de way we useter bring de cheers an' bokays!

"Well, de jay didn't have time to pick up dis truck, but I'll take care of it for him!"

CIRCUS SOLLY ABROAD

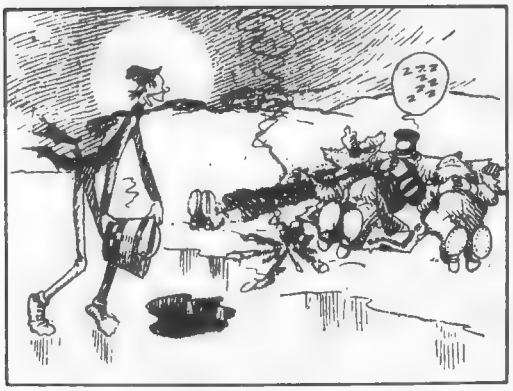

NOW WE'VE GOT YE-YE CAN'T GIT AWAY
WON'T DARKY BUBBLES LET LOOSE TH' BALLOON JIB
COME BACK YE LUBBERS
HOLD TO EP CAPN
SHIP AHOY-E-
WOT DID YE HOLO ON FUR?
REEF TH' JIB SAIL I SAY
WHOOPEE HAHAHOO
LOOK OUT, HE'S A FIERCE MAN
HELLO CHEF, HE'S AS TENDER AS CHICKEN I BOUGHT PUPA OVER FOR YOU
IS DAT SO
WE'LL SERVE HIM FOR DE BOOM FEAST
HE'LL MAKE FINE EATIN'

CIRCUS SOLLY AND THE HOLLOW TREE



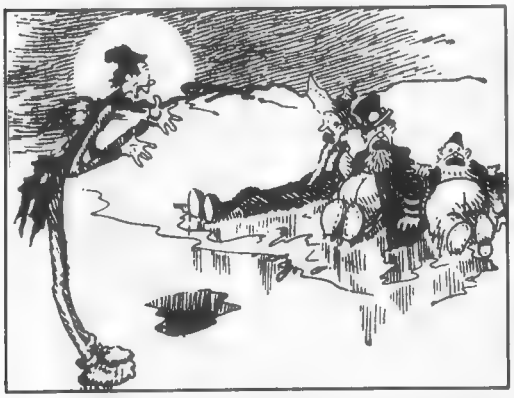
THE EVOLUTION OF A CHARACTER—Some of the very earliest appearances of Slim Jim (then Circus Solly) by George Frink. TOP, from the May 21, 1904 pre-print offering syndicated by the *Chicago Daily News*, wherein the hobo acrobat displays some circus skills. MIDDLE AND BOTTOM are pages (September 3, 1905 and June 18, 1905) that more foreshadow Buster Keaton's escapades with police.

All strips from collection of Rick Marschall



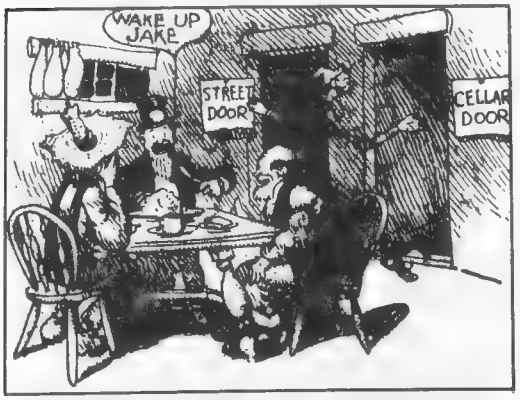
Circus Solly—"Now dat bivouac is jus' fer showin' off, so's dey kin git a raise de first o' de year! I mus' resort to severe measures.

"De wedder's turnin' cold an' if dis sprinkle o' water freezes afore dey wake I kin give 'em de lecture what dey deserve.

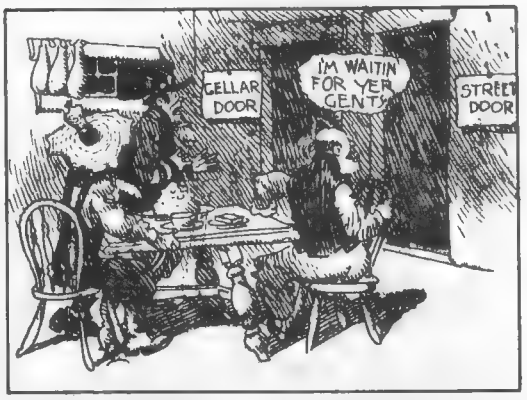


"Froze down, hey, gents! Well, dat's jus' what I s'posed. Youse is like me fren' Hank, youse'll——

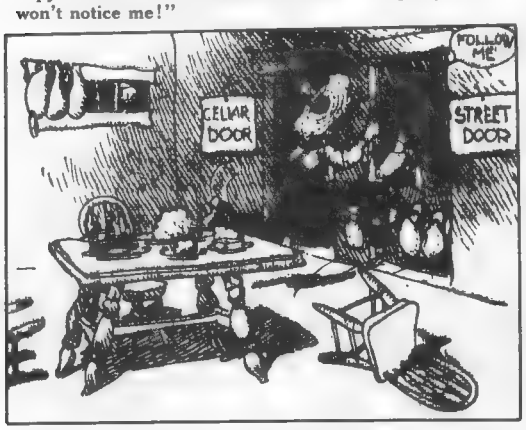
"Know better next time."



Circus Solly—"Dis is a darin' stunt, but de jays is dopy after all dat Christmas stuffin' an' p'raps dey won't notice me!"



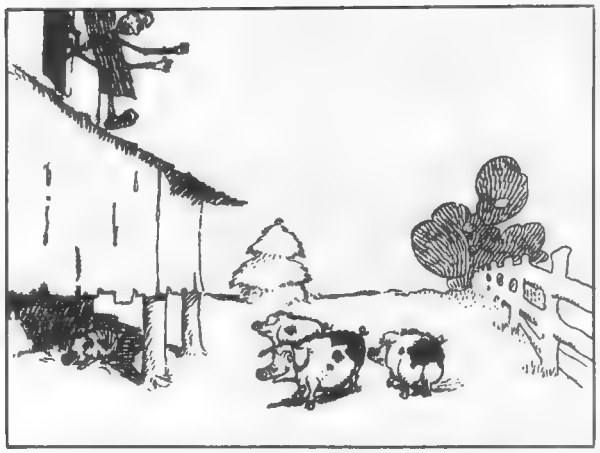
Grassville Chief—"What's that? The hobo's voice? Why, say, his Christmas fixin's must hev gone to his head. He's gettin' reckless!



After him! Ouch! Wow! Help! Murder! Where are we?"

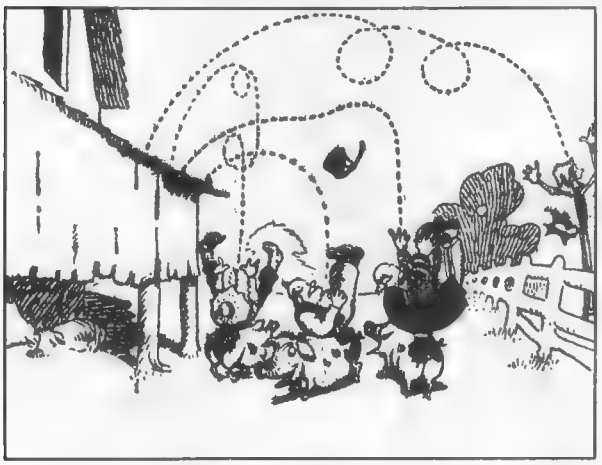
Circus Solly—"Just a hasty bite an' then to git away before de jays finish deir great act of 'Doomed to de Dungeon; or, Back from de Tombs.' "

Two strips of the Daily News boilerplate syndicate's *Circus Solly* after Frink returned from the Chicago Tribune. *Solly* was their most popular feature, running in many papers across America. (These samples are from February 11, 1906 and December 1, 1906.)



Circus Solly—"Now for one o' me double aerial whirls!"

Grassville Chief—"After him, men! Watch how he does it——



"An' foller——

"Me!"

ROSY POSY---MAMMA'S GIRL

HOW NICE! I CAN HELP MAMA NOW WITH MY NEW LITTLE SWEEPER
HURRY! FRANK, WE'VE JUST TIME FOR CHURCH
ALL RIGHT, BUT I CAN'T FIND MY DIAMOND STUD
WHY, FRANK! WHAT'S THE MATTER?
ROBBERY?! THIEVES! I'LL CALL THE POLICE MY DIAMOND WATCH EVERY THING GONE
SEND THE POLICE QUICK TERRIBLE ROBBERY AT MR ROSY'S HURRY!
GO INTO DER KITCHEN MIKE
HERE'S YER JEWELRY SIR. IN DIS SWEEPER
YAH! YAH!

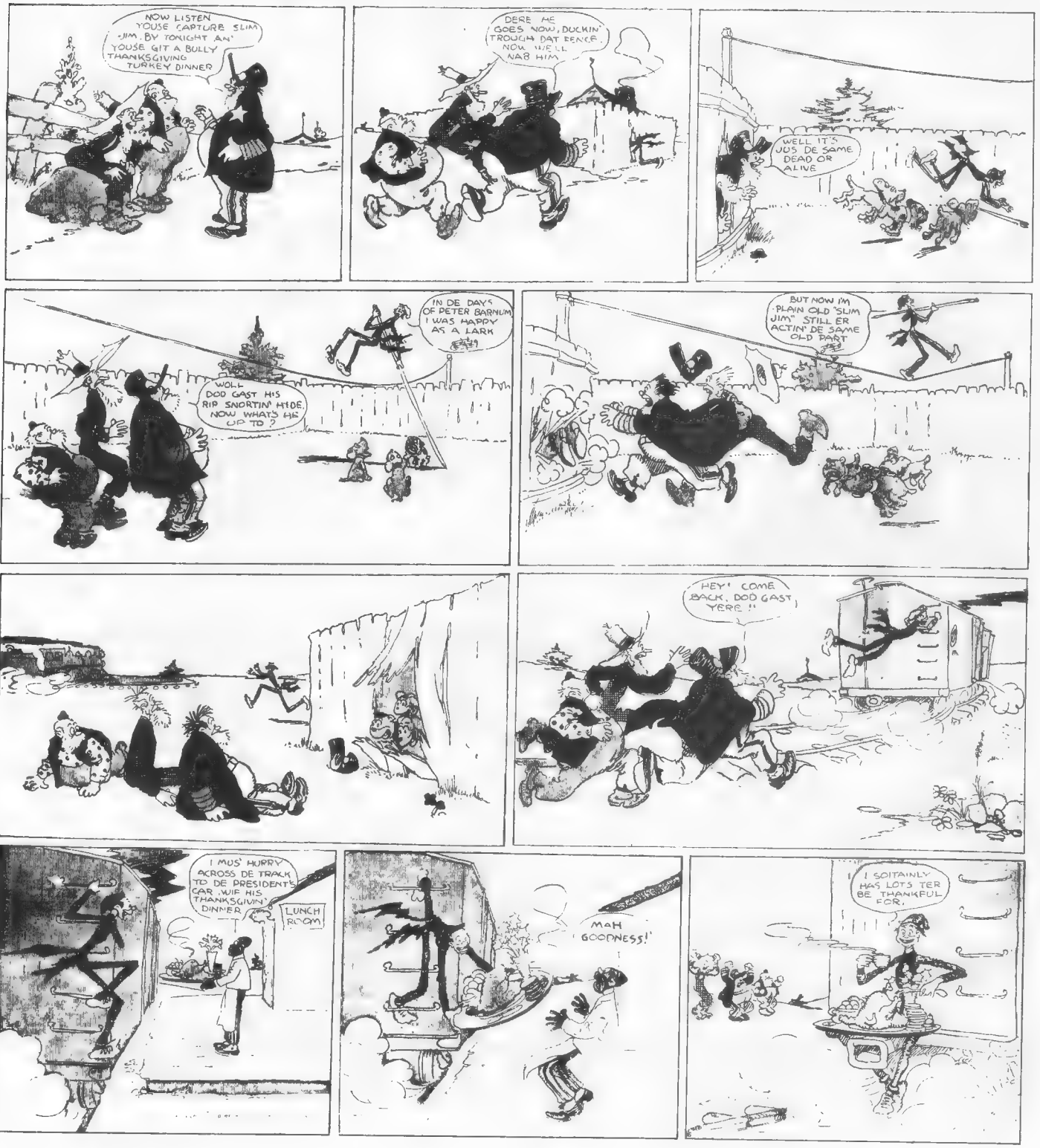
TOP—One of the last *Circus Solly* strips, showing an early use of a comic trademark, movement lines. Frink also advanced the action through fragmented, sequential speech as well as through visual progression. BELOW: A Frink page of *Rosy Posy* for the World Color Printing Service (December 1, 1906); the strip had been created by George Herriman.

THE DAILY INDEX-REPUBLICAN

BELLEFONTAINE, O., SATURDAY

NOV. 19, 1910

NO SLIM-JIM, NO TURKEY! FOR THE GRASSVILLE POLICE!

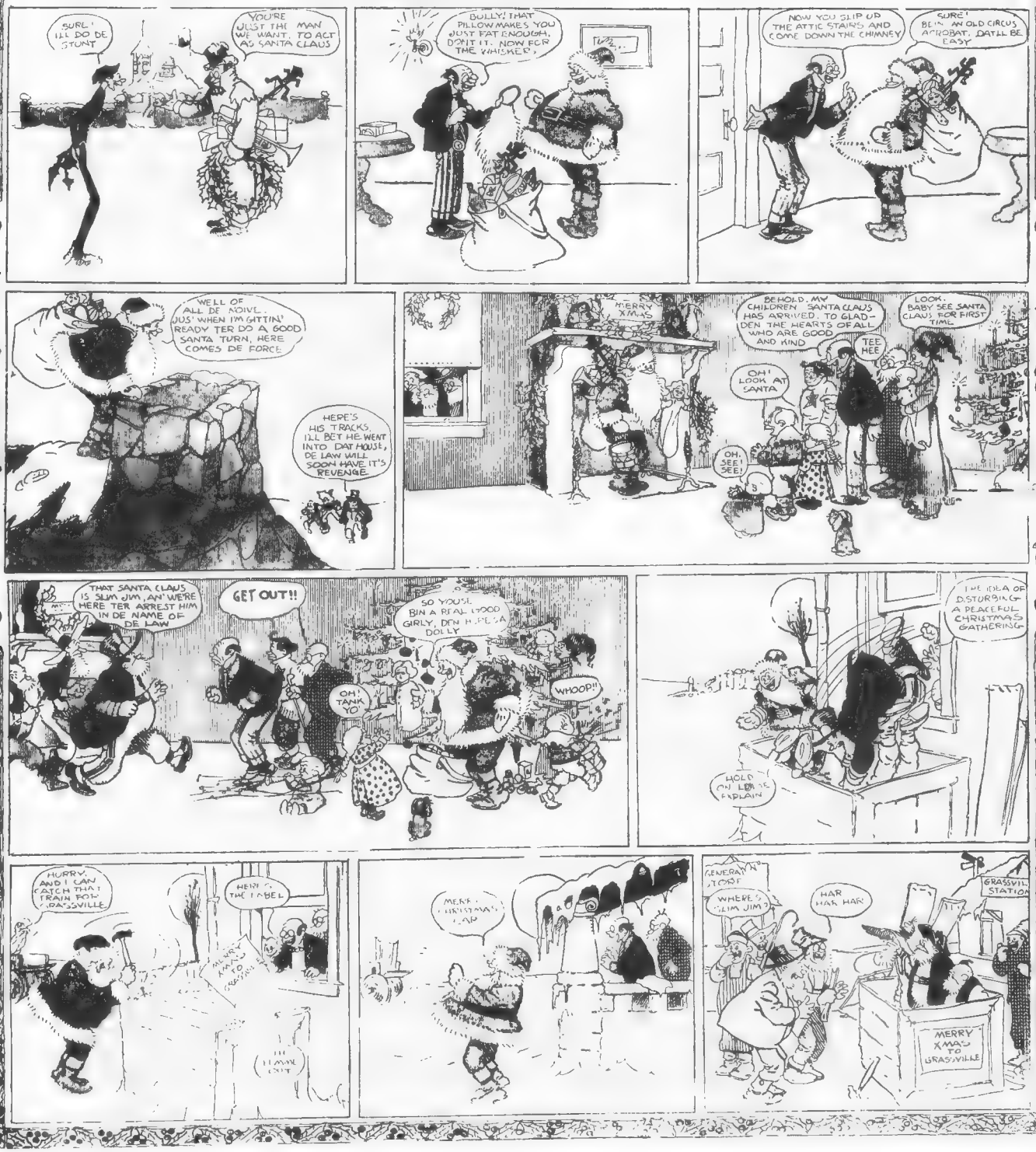

NOW LISTEN YOUSE CAPTURE SLIM JIM BY TONIGHT AN' YOUSE GIT A BULLY THANKSGIVING TURKEY DINNER
DERE HE GOES, NOW, DUCKIN' TROUGH DAT FENCE. NOW WE'LL NAB HIM
WELL IT'S JUS DE SAME DEAD OR ALIVE
IN DE DAYS OF PETER BARNUM I WAS HAPPY AS A LARK
WOLL DOD GAST HIS RIP SNORTIN' HIDE. NOW WHAT'S HE UP TO?
BUT NOW I'M PLAIN OLD 'SLIM JIM' STILL ER ACTIN' DE SAME OLD PART
HEY! COME BACK, DOD GAST YERE!!
I MUS' HURRY ACROSS DE TRACK TO DE PRESIDENT'S CAR WIF HIS THANKSGIVIN' DINNER
LUNCH ROOM
MAH GOODNESS!
I SOITAINLY HAS LOTS TER BE THANKFUL FOR.

THE DAILY INDEX-REPUBLICAN

BELLEFONTAINE, O., SATURDAY

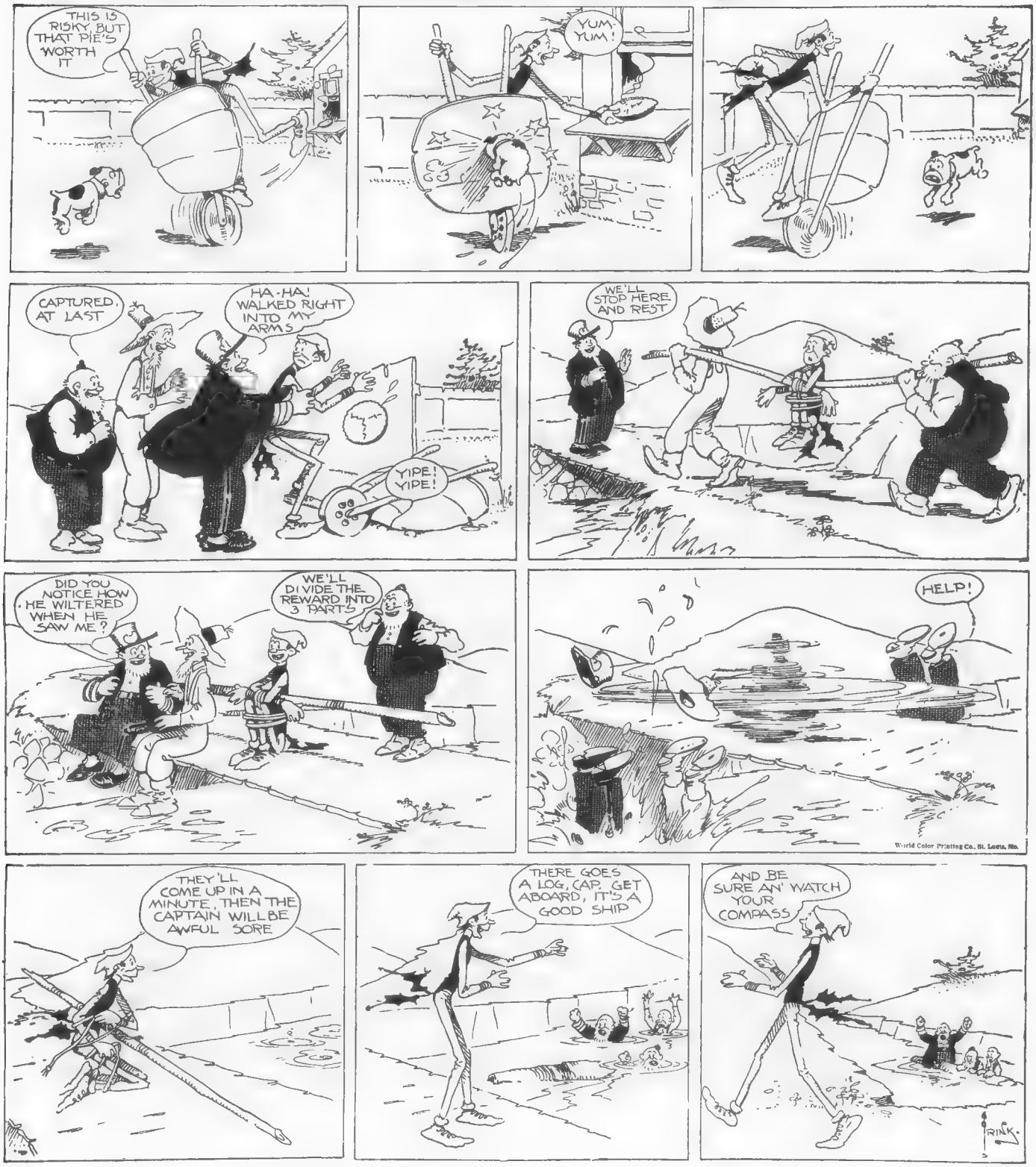
DEC. 10, 1910

HO! HO! HE! HE! SLIM-JIM A SANTA CLAUS. FUNNY, EH?


SURE! I'LL DO DE STUNT
YOU'RE JUST THE MAN WE WANT. TO ACT AS SANTA CLAUS
BULLY! THAT PILLOW MAKES YOU JUST FAT ENOUGH. DON'T IT. NOW FOR THE WHISKER
NOW YOU SLIP UP THE ATTIC STAIRS AND COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY
SURE! BEIN' AN OLD CIRCUS ACROBAT. DAT'LL BE EASY
WELL OF ALL DE NOIVE. JUS' WHEN I'M GITTIN' READY TER DO A GOOD SANTA TURN, HERE COMES DE FORCE
HERE'S HIS TRACKS. I'LL BET HE WENT INTO DAT HOUSE, DE LAW WILL SOON HAVE IT'S REVENGE
MERRY XMAS
BEHOLD. MY CHILDREN SANTA CLAUS HAS ARRIVED. TO GLADDEN THE HEARTS OF ALL WHO ARE GOOD AND KIND
LOOK. BABY SEE SANTA CLAUS FOR FIRST TIME
TEE HEE
OH! LOOK AT SANTA
OH. SEE! SEE!
THAT SANTA CLAUS IS SLIM JIM, AN' WE'RE HERE TER ARREST HIM IN DE NAME OF DE LAW
GET OUT!!
SO YOUSE BIN A REAL GOOD GIRLY, DEN H.PE'S A DOLLY
OH! TANK YO
WHOOP!!
THE IDEA OF DISTURBING A PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS GATHERING
HOLD ON LEMME EXPLAIN
HURRY AND I CAN CATCH THAT TRAIN FOR GRASSVILLE
HERE'S THE LABEL
MERRY CHRISTMAS PAP
GENERAL STORE
WHERE'S SLIM JIM?
HAR HAR HAR
GRASSVILLE STATION
MERRY XMAS TO GRASSVILLE

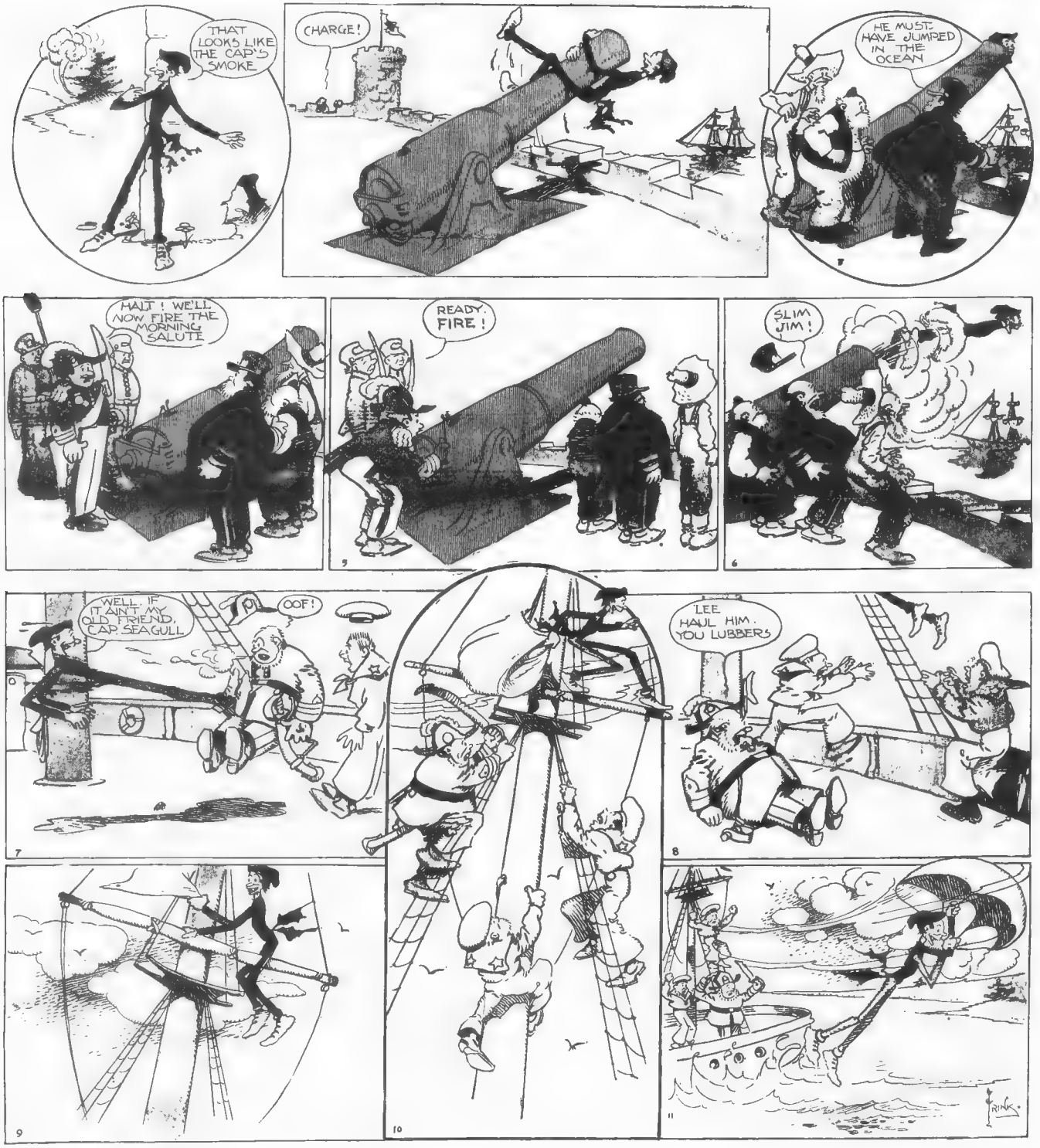
The Wichita Eagle.
WICHITA, KANS., SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 12, 1915

Cap Says Slim Is As Good As Captured Now!


THIS IS RISKY BUT THAT PIE'S WORTH IT
YUM-YUM!
CAPTURED AT LAST
HA-HA! WALKED RIGHT INTO MY ARMS
YIPE! YIPE!
WE'LL STOP HERE AND REST
DID YOU NOTICE HOW HE WILTERED WHEN HE SAW ME?
WE'LL DIVIDE THE REWARD INTO 3 PARTS
HELP!
World Color Printing Co., St. Louis, Mo.
THEY'LL COME UP IN A MINUTE, THEN THE CAPTAIN WILL BE AWFUL SORE
THERE GOES A LOG, CAP. GET ABOARD, IT'S A GOOD SHIP
AND BE SURE AN' WATCH YOUR COMPASS
RINK.

THE DAILY INDEX-REPUBLICAN
BELLEFONTAINE, O., SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 6, 1915

- Slim Jim Joins In the Morning Salute! -


THAT LOOKS LIKE THE CAP'S SMOKE
CHARGE!
HE MUST HAVE JUMPED IN THE OCEAN
HALT! WE'LL NOW FIRE THE MORNING SALUTE
READY. FIRE!
SLIM JIM!
WELL, IF IT AIN'T MY OLD FRIEND, CAP. SEAGULL
OOF!
LEE HAUL HIM. YOU LUBBERS
FRINK

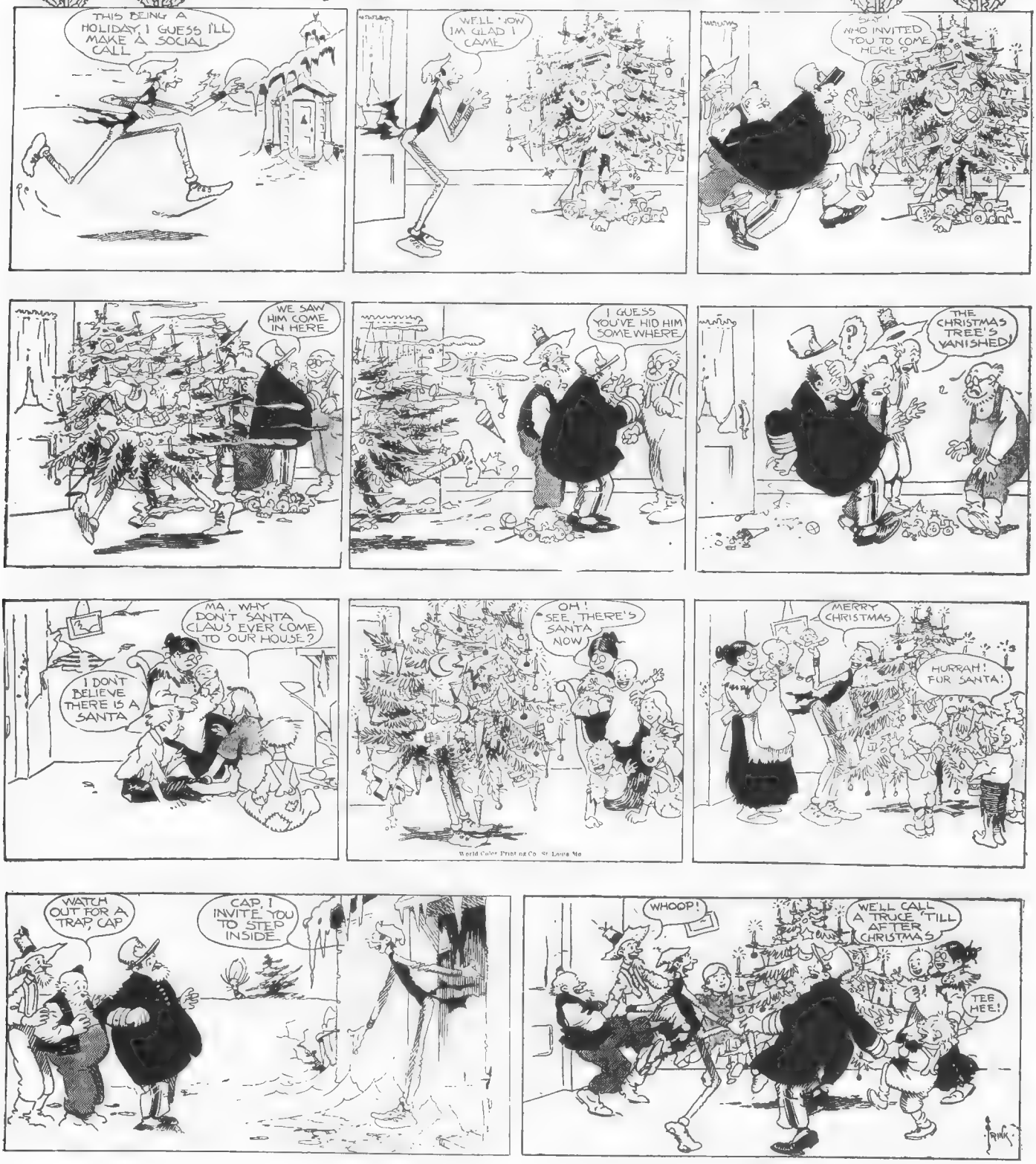
MERRY XMAS

The Wichita Eagle.

WICHITA, KANS., SUNDAY

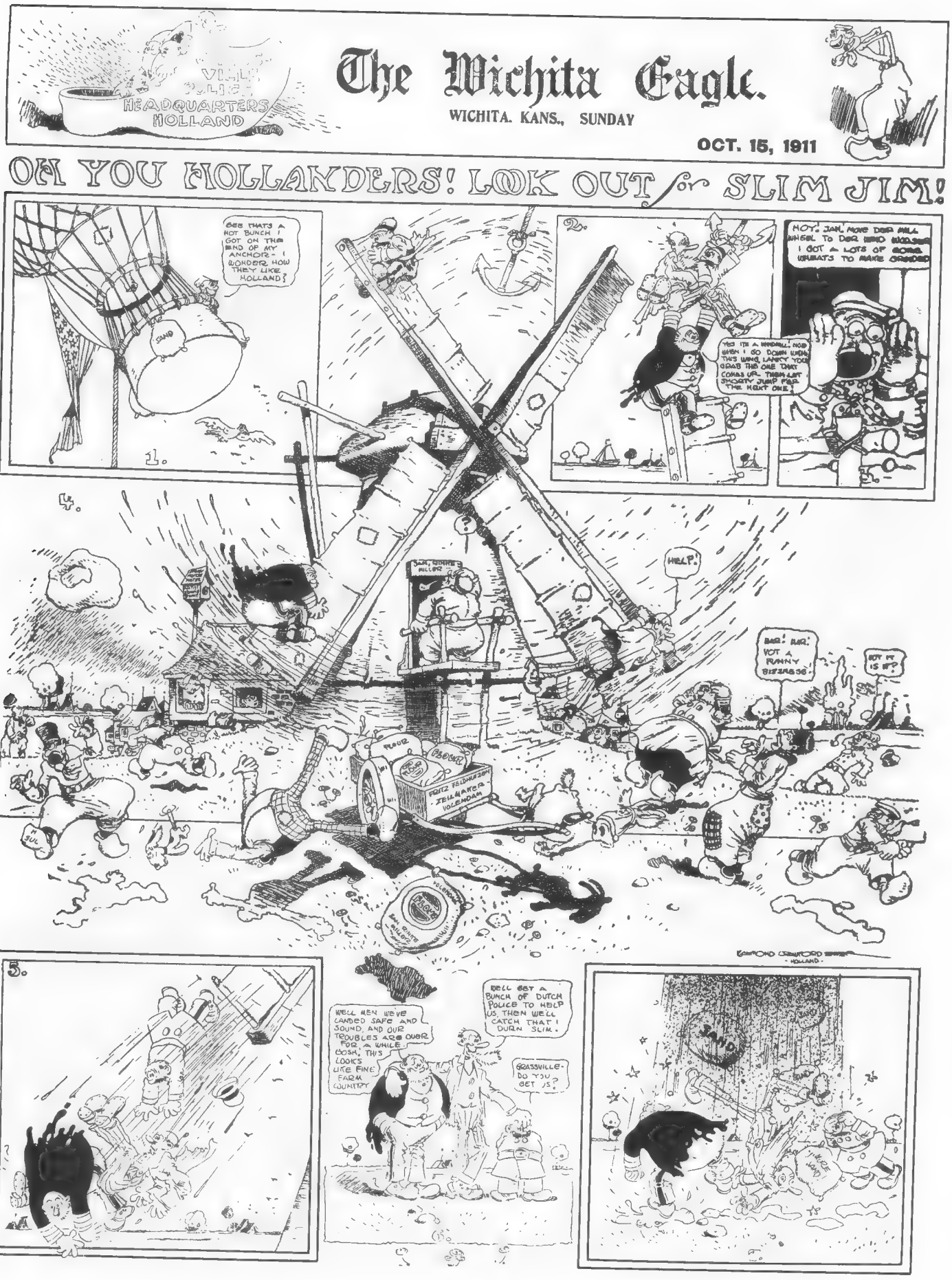
DECEMBER 12, 1915

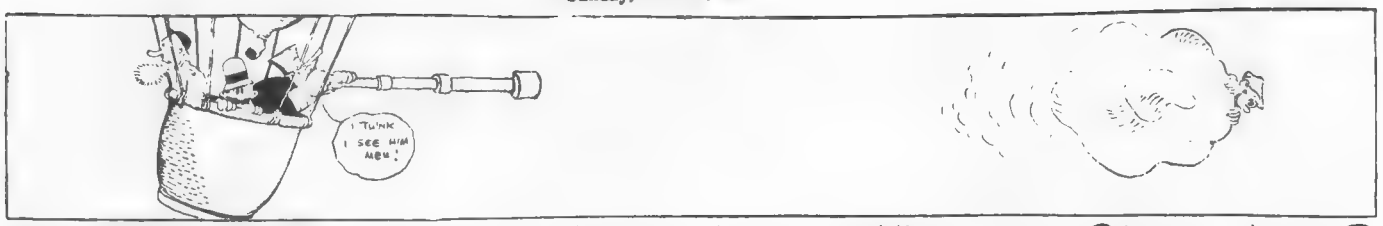
Merry Christmas---From Slim Jim


THIS BEING A HOLIDAY, I GUESS I'LL MAKE A SOCIAL CALL
WELL, NOW I'M GLAD I CAME
SAY! WHO INVITED YOU TO COME HERE?
WE SAW HIM COME IN HERE
I GUESS YOU'VE HID HIM SOMEWHERE
THE CHRISTMAS TREE'S VANISHED!
MA, WHY DON'T SANTA CLAUS EVER COME TO OUR HOUSE?
I DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS A SANTA
OH! SEE, THERE'S SANTA NOW!
MERRY CHRISTMAS
HURRAH! FUR SANTA!
World Color Print'g Co St Louis Mo
WATCH OUT FOR A TRAP, CAP
CAP, I INVITE YOU TO STEP INSIDE
WHOOP!
WE'LL CALL A TRUCE 'TILL AFTER CHRISTMAS
TEE HEE!

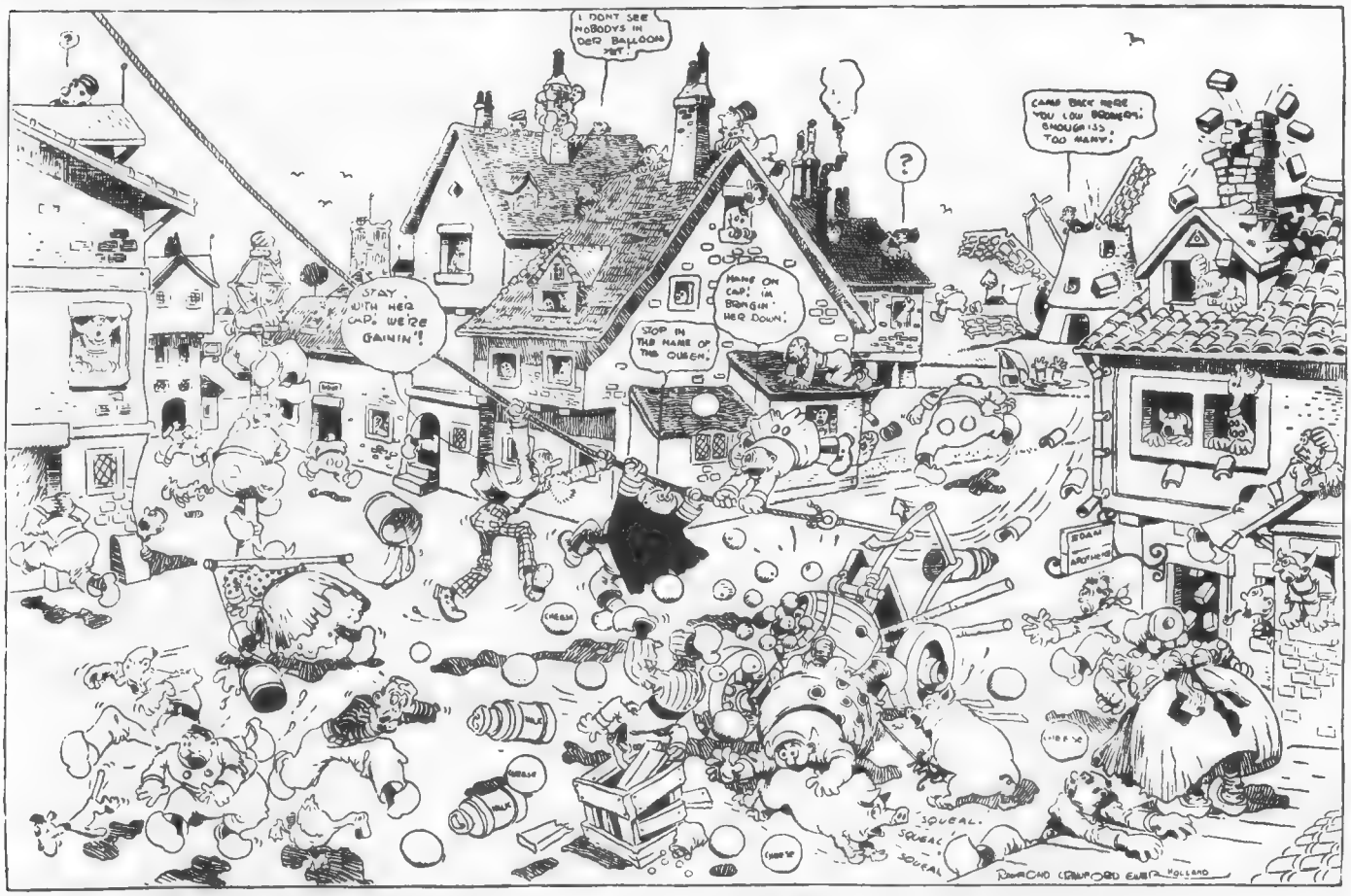
The Wichita Eagle.
WICHITA, KANS., SUNDAY
JULY 3, 1910
BROWN • CITY FARMER - PUT THE TRAMPS TO WORK - ON "EATIN'S"
MIN YOU OBLIGE A POOR FELLER BY GIVIN HIM A BITE TO EAT?
WHY CERTAINLY COME RIGHT IN
WHEN YOU GET THROUGH WITH THAT THE WIFE'S GOT A WHOLE SLOUGH OF FLANNEL CAKES FOR YOU.
WHERE'D YOU GET THE NEW HIRED MAN MR. CRIBBER?
THAT AIN'T NO HIRED MAN THATS JUST A TRAMP EARNIN' HIS DINNER!
GEE. THAT TRAMP - BUSINESS GIVES ME AN IDEA!
SAY IF YOU CAN GET A BUNCH OF YOUR FRIENDS TO COME HERE AND CHOP WOOD I'LL GIVE THEM ALL A WHOPPING BIG FEED!
MIN I? WELL WATCH ME!
LEAD US TO IT!
OH OUR WAY!
OVER THE FENCE, IS OUT!
EVEM ME MUDDER COULDN'T COOK LIKE DIS!
HELP IM BUSTIN'
SAY SKINNY! ARE YOUSE A TANK?
HERE'S SOME MORE FLAP JACKS HORACE
HAVE SOME MORE CIDER, BOYS PLENTY HERE!
IS DIS A DREAM!
YES I TINK I'D TAKE A BATH IN CIDER
WELL BOYS WE'VE HAD OUR FUN. NOW TO WORK - THERE'S PLENTY OF AXES AND SAWS, SO PILE IN AND MAKE IT LOOK SICK! IM GOING DOWN TO THE LOWER PASTURE NOW AND I'LL BE BACK IN TEN MINUTES - LET-ER-GO!
SAY, WE'LL JUST EAT IT UP!
OH WOT I WONT DO TO DAT WOOD!
GONE!
TEN MINUTES LATER
WORLD COLOR PRINTING CO. ST. LOUIS

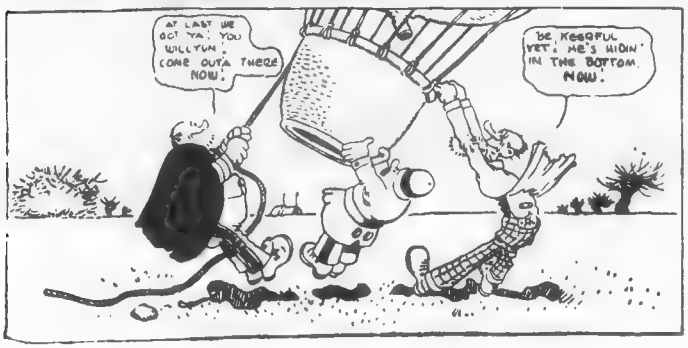
In 1910 Raymond Crawford Ewer joined the World Color Printing Company. He created the handsome *Brown the City Farmer* and inherited the witty and urbane *Alexander the Cat* from George Herriman. By the end of the year he was to take over Frink's *Slim Jim*.


HEADQUARTERS HOLLAND
The Wichita Eagle.
WICHITA. KANS., SUNDAY
OCT. 15, 1911
OH YOU HOLLANDERS! LOOK OUT for SLIM JIM!
1.
SEE THAT'S A HOT BUNCH I GOT ON THE END OF MY ANCHOR - I WONDER HOW THEY LIKE HOLLAND?
2.
YES ITS A WINDMILL, NOW WHEN I GO DOWN WITH THIS WING, LANKY YOU GRAB THE ONE THAT COMES UP - THEN JUST SHOOTY JUMP FOR THE NEXT ONE!
HOY! JAN, MOVE DER MILL WINGS TO DER RIND NICKSUIT I GOT A LOTS OF SOME WHEATS TO MAKE GROUND
3.
HELP!
HA! HA! YOT A FUNNY SIZZAS36!
HOT IT IS IT?
FRITZ FELDWEBEL JELLMAKER VOLENDAM
4.
WELL MEN WE'VE LANDED SAFE AND SOUND, AND OUR TROUBLES ARE OVER FOR A WHILE - GOSH, THIS LOOKS LIKE FINE FARM COUNTRY
WELL GET A BUNCH OF DUTCH POLICE TO HELP US, THEN WE'LL CATCH THAT DURN SLIM.
GRASSVILLE - DO YOU GET IS?
5.
BANG
BANG
BANG
RAYMOND CRAWFORD
HOLLAND



There's a Hot Time in Edam but -- Where's Slim Jim?


I DONT SEE NOBODYS IN DER BALLOON YET.
STAY WITH HER CAP! WE'RE GAININ'!
HAND ON CAP! IM BRINGIN' HER DOWN!
STOP IN THE NAME OF THE QUEEN.
CAME BACK HERE YOU LOW BROWED! SMOUCHES, TOO MANY!
?
EDAM
SQUEAL
SQUEAL
SQUEAL
RICHARD CRAMPTON ELLIS HOLLAND

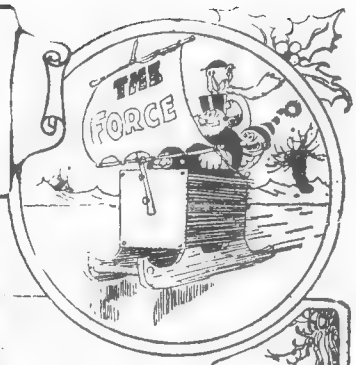


The Wichita Eagle.

WICHITA, KANS., SUNDAY

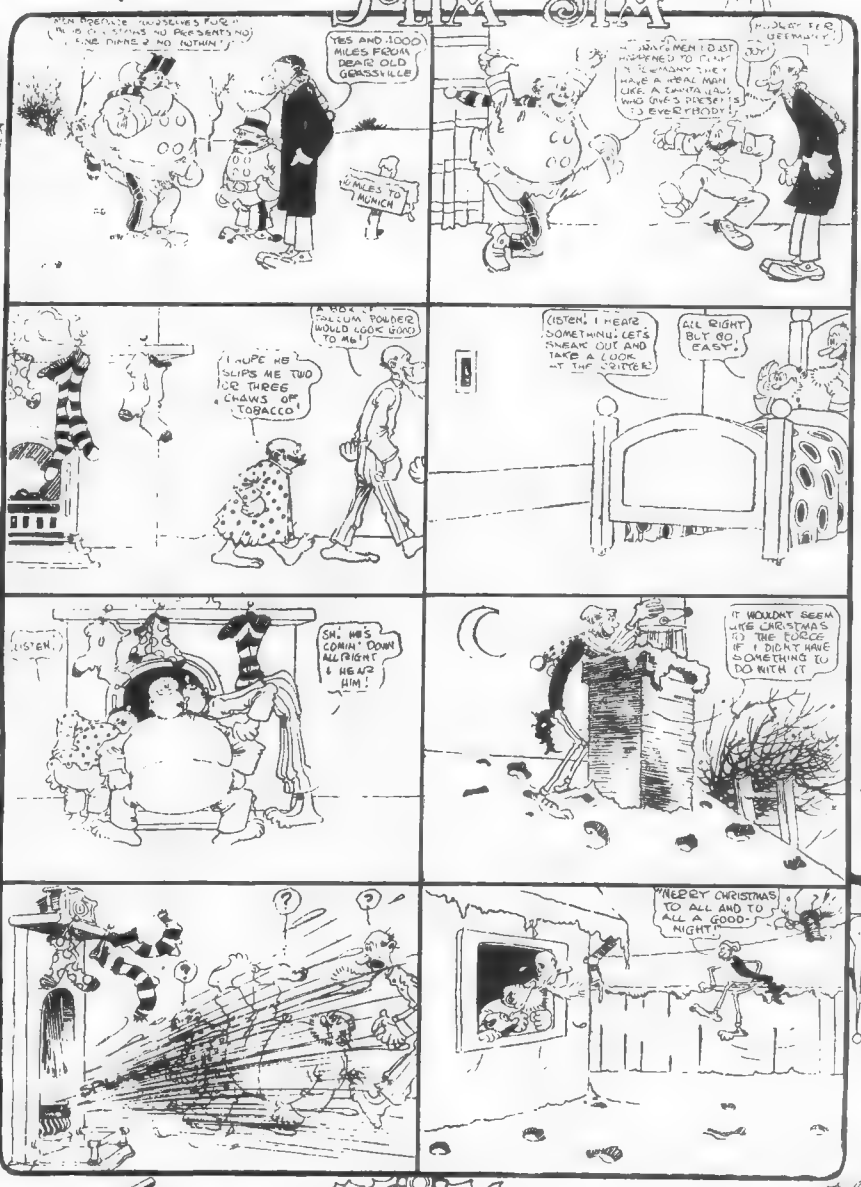
DEC. 10, 1911

Merry Christmas to the big and little folk who laugh at Slim Jim from the artist who draws him.

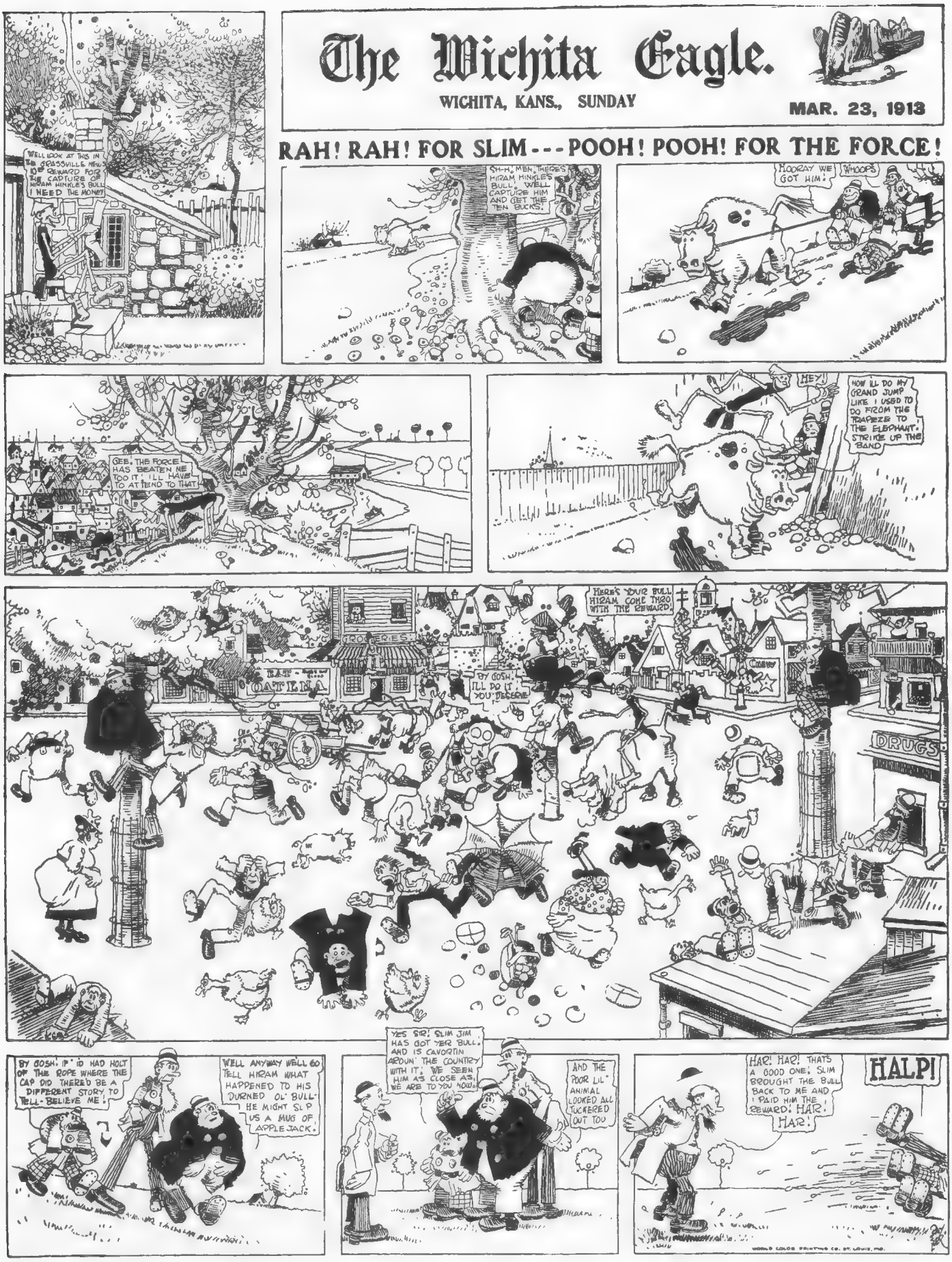


Christmas 1911

Slim Jim


YES AND 1000 MILES FROM DEAR OLD GRASSVILLE
MILES TO MUNICH
I HOPE HE SLIPS ME TWO OR THREE CHAWS OF TOBACCO
LISTEN! I HEARE SOMETHING! LETS SNEAK OUT AND TAKE A LOOK AT THE CRITTER!
ALL RIGHT BUT BE EASY!
SH! HE'S COMIN' DOWN ALL RIGHT I HEARE HIM!
IT WOULDN'T SEEM LIKE CHRISTMAS TO THE FORCE IF I DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!

Now that Christmas has come,
Let us beat up the drum,
And call all our neighbors together.
And when they appear
Let us make them such cheer
As will keep out the wind and the weather.

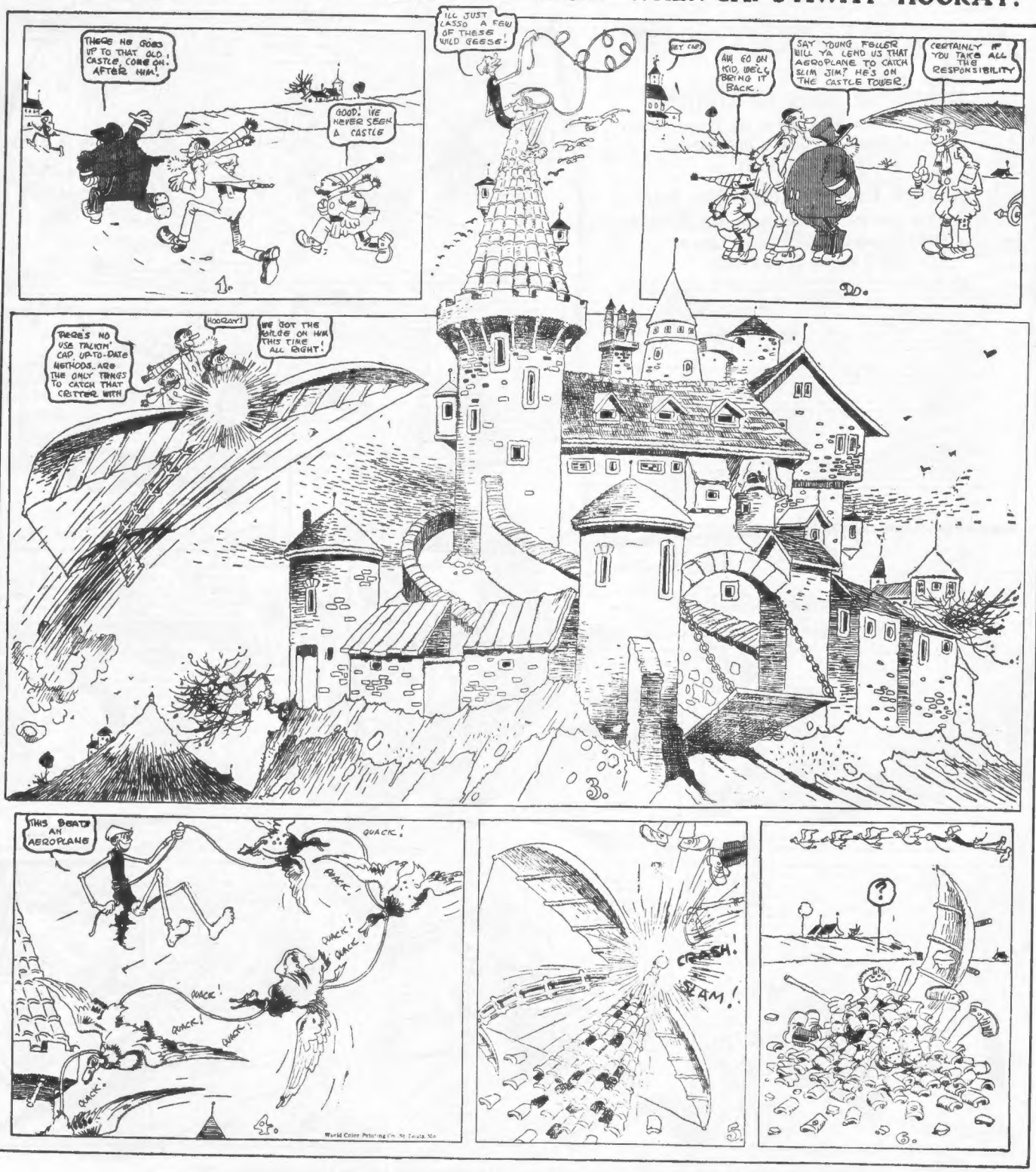

The Wichita Eagle.
WICHITA, KANS., SUNDAY
MAR. 23, 1913
RAH! RAH! FOR SLIM---POOH! POOH! FOR THE FORCE!
WELL LOOK AT THIS IN THE GRASSVILLE NEWS! $10 REWARD FOR THE CAPTURE OF HIRAM HINKLE'S BULL! I NEED THE MONEY!
SH-H-H, MEN, THERE'S HIRAM HINKLE'S BULL. WELL CAPTURE HIM AND GET THE TEN BUCKS.
HOORAY WE GOT HIM.
WHOOPS
GEE, THE FORCE HAS BEATEN ME TOO IT. I'LL HAVE TO ATTEND TO THAT!
HEY!
HOW'LL DO MY GRAND JUMP LIKE I USED TO DO FROM THE TRAPEZE TO THE ELEPHANT. STRIKE UP THE BAND.
HERE'S YOUR BULL HIRAM, COME THRO WITH THE REWARD.
GROCERIES
EAT OATENA
BY GOSH. I'LL DO IT YOU BELIEVE
DRUGS
BY GOSH. IF I'D HAD HOLT OF THE ROPE WHERE THE CAP DID THERE'D BE A DIFFERENT STORY TO TELL. BELIEVE ME.
WELL ANYWAY WE'LL GO TELL HIRAM WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS DURNED OL' BULL. HE MIGHT SLIP US A MUG OF APPLE JACK.
YES SIR! SLIM JIM HAS GOT YER BULL. AND IS CAVORTIN AROUN' THE COUNTRY WITH IT. WE SEEN HIM AS CLOSE AS WE ARE TO YOU NOW.
AND THE POOR LIL' ANIMAL LOOKED ALL TUCKERED OUT TOO
HAR! HAR! THAT'S A GOOD ONE. SLIM BROUGHT THE BULL BACK TO ME AND I PAID HIM THE REWARD. HAR. HAR.
HALP!
WORLD COLOR PRINTING CO. ST. LOUIS, MO.

The Mobile Item

MOBILE, ALABAMA, SUNDAY

MARCH 14, 1915

QUACK! QUACK! WHEN'LL SLIM COME BACK?--WHEN CAP'S AWAY--HOORAY!


THERE HE GOES UP TO THAT OLD CASTLE. COME ON. AFTER HIM!
GOOD! WE NEVER SEEN A CASTLE
1.
I'LL JUST LASSO A FEW OF THESE WILD GEESE!
HEY CAP!
AW, GO ON KID, WE'LL BRING IT BACK.
SAY YOUNG FELLER WILL YA LEND US THAT AEROPLANE TO CATCH SLIM JIM? HE'S ON THE CASTLE TOWER.
CERTAINLY IF YOU TAKE ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY
2.
THERE'S NO USE TALKIN' CAP, UP-TO-DATE METHODS ARE THE ONLY THINGS TO CATCH THAT CRITTER WITH
HOORAY!
WE GOT THE GOOSE ON HIM THIS TIME ALL RIGHT!
3.
THIS BEATS AN AEROPLANE
QUACK!
4.
CRASH!
SLAM!
5.
?
6.

World Color Printing Co. St. Louis, Mo.

The Mobile Item

MOBILE, ALABAMA, SUNDAY

JUNE 6, 1915

Who's All Right?---Slim Jim!

GRASSVILLE WEEKLY WHOOP

A FAMILY PAPER. — FEARLESS — FORCEFUL — EDITORIAL PAGE

Horrible State of Affairs!

That's What's In Grassville at the Present Writing or We Don't Know a Piffle About What We're Sayin'

It's High Time Somethin' Wuz Done

Below You Find the Terrible Particulars of What's Bein' Kicked Up In the Police Line and You'll Find It Good Readin'

It is said somebody said that something big is about to happen to our Police Force, in other words it is rumored that the aforesaid P. F. is about to be tied to a can if something isn't doin' mighty quick in th' ketchin line.

A certain long-legged critter by the name o' Slim Jim has been cuttin' up Jack an' raisin' all kinder cain in this burg and the surrounding territory and a makin' big monkeys out of our local P. F.

Understand us, we're not a sayin' all this stuff with malice aforethought (for our P. F. is a dinged good bunch o' fellers in a personal way), but we just want to give them a big hunch so's they can wake up afore somethin's done which they don't like a little bit.

Our honorable mayor has had a grouch on for several days now an' if things don't take a new turn something's goin to bust, that's all!

Remember, for the good of all concerned, we are not mentioning any names, for we don't believe in "personal encounters," but we do hope that the P. F. will get a new wiggle on and round up that pestiferous hobo quicker'n a jiffy.

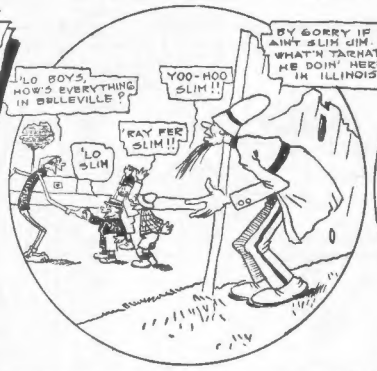
Our bounden duty is to see that this town is run right an' while there's a desprit hobo at large in our fair burg it can't be did, that's what we say!

After readin' this editorial resolve to do all you can to help the aforesaid P. F capture this feller Slim Jim, an' to better aid in th' cause you can just come aroun to our office an' pay up your subscription, which we've a been carryin' on th' books so long we've forgotten how long.

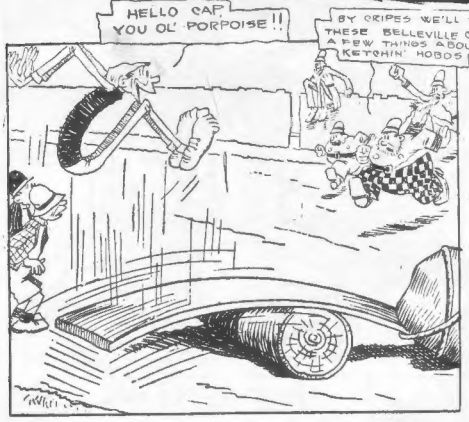
Or if you have by mistake paid up we'll take pleasure in extending your subscription as far as you wanter pay as this feller Slim Jim must be caught at any cost.

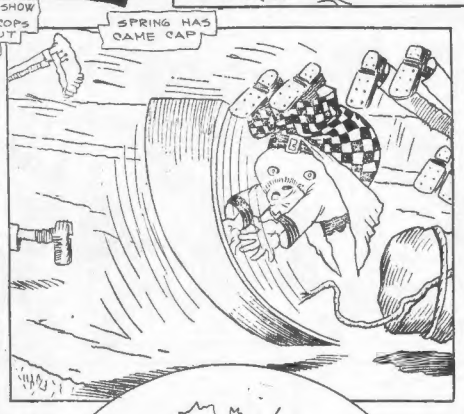
Take it from us we're in this chase from the ground up, an' if the force'll only gin per up we can fill our city bastile with that long-legged hobo an' live happy ever after!

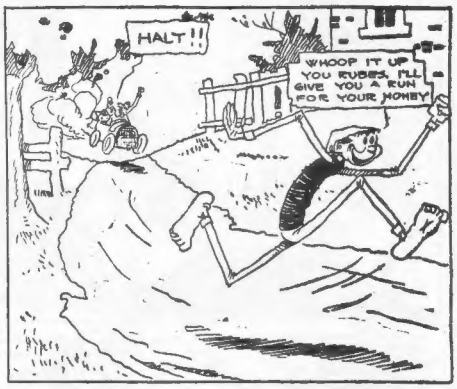
So let's all pull together fellers and drink a long, deep toast to "The Day"---Do you get us?

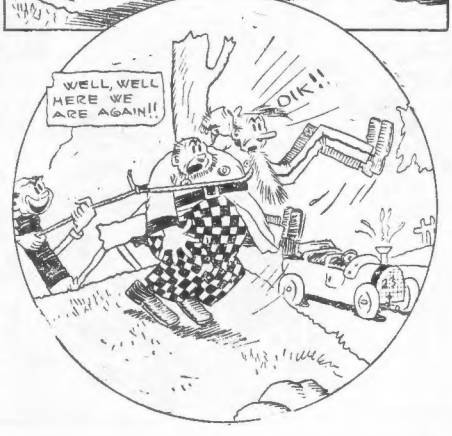

LO BOYS, HOW'S EVERYTHING IN BELLEVILLE?
YOO-HOO SLIM!!
BY GORRY IF IT AIN'T SLIM JIM. WHAT'N TARNATION'S HE DOIN' HERE IN ILLINOIS?
RAY FER SLIM!!
LO SLIM

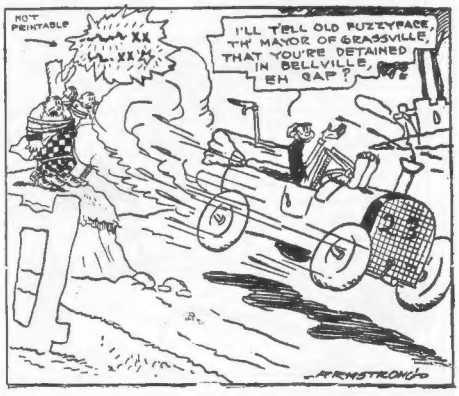
IS THIS TH' CAPTING OF TH' GRASSVILLE POLICE? SAY THAT HOBO SLIM JIM'S HERE IN BELLEVILLE. FOR TH' LOVE OF PETE HURRY OVER AND GET HIM BEFORE HE STARTS A RIOT!!











Stanley Armstrong drew *Slim Jim* for much of 1915, and was the permanent artist between 1916 and the strip's demise in 1937.

LEM PERKINS IS PUZZLED THESE DAYS. HE CAN'T FIGURE WHERE HIS LAP GOES WHEN HE STANDS UP.
BAH JOVE! RIPPING!!
SLY SAYINGS OF SLIM JIM

SLIM JIM AND THE FORCE

WHOOP! WE'RE A LITTLE LOOSE TO GRASSVILLE
BY GRAVY! THERE'S HERMAN PETERSON.
'LO HERMAN!

'LO DAN!
HOWDY MR. MAYOR!
WELCOME CAPTING!
THAT'S TH GRASSVILLE POSSE BACK FROM FLORIDY.
WELL I SWAN!!

YES S'R, WE BOUGHT THOSE LOTS DOWN THERE. IF I TOLD YOU WHAT WE SOLD 'EM FOR YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT.
NO S'R!

SIM TYLER WUZ JEST TELLIN' ME THAT TH' CAPTING MADE THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS ON THEM LOTS!
LAND SAKES!

HOWDY MRS. PERKINS! I JEST GOT BACK FROM FLORIDY.
OH CAPTING! HOW THRILLING!

Y' WON'T SEE ANY MORE OF SLIM JIM FOR AWHILE MR. MAYOR. HE'S A REAL ESTATE SHARK DOWN THERE
YEP, WE SAW HIM.
FINE CAPTING, FINE.

WELL S'R, IT DOES SEEM GOOD TO GET BACK TO TH' OLD TOWN AGAIN.
AND NO SLIM JIM TO PESTER US.

WHAT Y'GOT, SOME WILD CLAMS IN THERE SLIM?
A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR SOME OF MY FRIENDS.
ARK-ARK!

ATTA BOY HERMAN! ONE MORE WIGGLE AND YOU'LL BE OUT.
AR-R-K!

HOY CAP! HERE WE ARE!!
ARK! ARK! ARK!

SHAKE A LEG LANK!
FOR TH' LOVE OF PETE, GIT OUT OF TH' WAY SHORTY!!
ARK!
yoi

SO LONG GENTS. WE'LL SEE YOU LATER.

A POLAR BEAR, WITH LOTS OF HAIR, LOVED NEAR THE BOREALIS. HE MADE LOVE TO A FLAPPER SEAL HER NAME WAS "CUTIE" ALICE.
OH ALICE!
'LO KID!

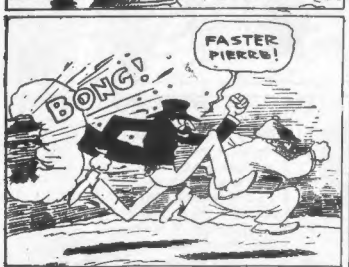
SLIM JIM AND THE FORCE

SH-H-H! I'M SURE THIS IS WHERE SLIM JIM LIVES. WE'LL SLIP INSIDE AND CAPTURE HIM WHILE HE SLEEPS.

BURGLARS, BY HECK!

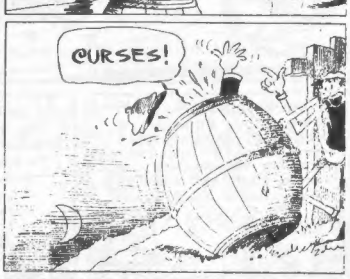
WHO'S THERE?
THE WRONG HOUSE!
CURSES!
BANG.

HALT! DINGBUST YE!
BONG


BONG!
FASTER PIERRE!

WHEW! THAT WAS A CLOSE SQUEAK!
SH-H-H! SLEEM JEEM! HE COME M'SIEU!

IT'S LUCKY YOU SAW HIM PIERRE. WE'LL KEEP OUT OF SIGHT TILL HE COMES CLOSE, THEN WE'LL LEAP ON HIM.


CURSES!

WHOOP!

WELL MEN, GUESS WE'D BETTER GO HOME AND TURN IN. NO SLIM ABOUT. EVERYTHING CALM AND PEACEFUL.
O.K. CAP!

HOY CAP!
YOU BOYS ALVE DE DAT'S WHISPERS WHEN IT COMES TO FANCY TIMBALIN.

FLY SAYINGS BY SLIM JIM
TIM TINKLEHORN SAYS HE KNEW A FELLER IN TEXAS THAT WAS SO TOUGH HE USED BARBED WIRE FOR A TOOTH BRUSH.

DAILY CAPITAL NEWS

Jefferson City's Leading Newspaper *Full Leased Wire of Associated Press*

Jefferson City, Mo., Sunday,
February 24, 1929

SLIM JIM AND THE FORCE

G'WAN, SLIM, TELL US ANOTHER STORY ABOUT A STRANGE COUNTRY WITH FUNNY ANIMALS.
I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE LAND OF WHANG.
THIS STRANGE LAND IS AWAY BEYOND THE HAW-HAW MOUNTAINS AND IS BORDERED ON ONE SIDE BY THE GIGGLING RIVER, AND ON THE OTHER SIDE BY THE SNICKERING RIVER.
GHEE, WOT NAMES.
WELL, HERE'S WHAT I SAW IN THE LAND OF WHANG:
THE LAND OF WHANG
?
THAT'S A FUNNY LOOKING THING. I WONDER WHAT IT IS. GEE! THE TOP IS OPENING!
HA-HA, SLIM JIM! WELCOME TO THE LAND OF WHANG!
HA-HA-HA! KIND OF SURPRISED YOU WHEN I POPPED OUT OF THAT PLANT, HUH? MY NAME IS COO-COO. NOW I'LL CALL MY TAXI, AND SHOW YOU THE SIGHTS.
YOU'LL SOON SEE SOME OF THE STRANGE ANIMALS THAT LIVE IN THE LAND OF WHANG.
THIS IS THE BIFFBANG. HE IS HARMLESS EXCEPT WHEN HE'S HUNGRY.
YOWP!
THAT'S THE RING-TAILED WOOFUS BIRD. HE ALWAYS FLIES BACKWARD, SO AS TO KEEP THE SAND OUT OF HIS EYES.
HEY, COO-COO! THERE'S TH' GRASSVILLE FORCE THAT'S ALWAYS TRYIN' TO CATCH ME, I WONDER HOW THEY FOUND OUT I WAS IN THE LAND OF WHANG.
I'LL ATTEND TO THEM.
DON'T WORRY, SLIM I'LL CALL THE OLD BOY THAT'LL MAKE 'EM TAKE TO THEIR HEELS.
EE-OO! EE-OO!
QUARK QUARK
HE WON'T HURT 'EM. HE'LL ONLY DRIVE 'EM OUT OF THE LAND OF WHANG.
BY THE TIME THE FORCE WAS SCARED AWAY IT WAS NEARLY DARK, SO COO-COO WHISTLED AND A MOMENT LATER A GREAT BIRD SETTLED DOWN NEAR ME. I BID COO-COO GOOD-BYE, HOPPED ONTO THE BIRD'S BACK, AND IN NO TIME WAS BACK IN GRASSVILLE.
CRIPES!
ARMSTRONG